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7:30 a.m.: Flooding threatens Indiana cities, towns

Flooding caused by heavy rains and melting snow was threatening cities and towns across much of Indiana, the National Weather Service said.

The weather service extended flood warnings for the Wabash, Tippecanoe and other major rivers into at least Thursday and warned motorists to stay out of deep water.

High waters might have contributed to at least one death when a vehicle plunged into a water-filled quarry.

In Newton County, divers found a vehicle under 56 feet of water in the quarry Wednesday. The car may have plunged into the icy water during the night east of Kentland in northwestern Indiana. State conservation officers said they believed at least one person was in the vehicle.

A diver wasn't able to open the doors to remove the body, conservation officers said in a statement. The recovery effort was postponed until the quarry's owners could pump out the water, Conservation Officer Matt Tholen said.

Rain up to 3 inches this week and melting snow were causing rivers to spill into some of the

same low-lying areas hit hard last month.

The weather service said rising flood waters could affect communities as far apart as South Bend, Fort Wayne, Monticello, Peru and Logansport.

The worst flooding likely was on the Tippecanoe River below the Oakdale Dam in Carroll, White and Tippecanoe counties, where as many as 500 homes could be flooded, said Ed Terrell, weather service meteorologist. Officials had asked nearby residents to voluntarily evacuate their homes.

The weather service warned late Wednesday that flooding also would continue downstream of the Norway Dam in White County, though dam operators expected to be able to slow reduce the level of water discharged from the dam.

Fountain County emergency management officials went door-to-door warning residents along the Wabash River that if the level continues to rise, they may have to evacuate.

The Wabash level near Lafayette about 7 p.m. was 23.48 feet, Terrell said.

The river swelled over its banks to just over 22 feet last month. Al Shipe, a hydrologist with the weather service, said it would likely crest between 24 and 25 feet. If the river gets 2 or 3 feet higher than it did in January, there could be significant flooding, he said, the worst between Lafayette and Terre Haute.

The weather service said the Wabash could reach its highest flood level since January 2005 when it crested at 25.03 feet and that major flooding was expected along the Tippecanoe River. Cresting on many of the rivers will occur over the weekend into next week, the weather service said.

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9:46 p.m.: Water-logged Alexandria stays afloat amidst flooding

By Brandi Watters

Roadways across Alexandria were shut down on Wednesday as flood waters covered the town's landscape. The lawns of many homes dotting Indiana 9 were saturated with swirling, brown water as low-lying areas gathered rain from the storm.

Five streets were at least partially closed within the city as a result of Tuesday night storms and Wednesday rainfall, which dumped 2-3 inches across Madison County.

Water swarmed sections of Washington and John streets along Indiana 9, threatening to flood area businesses. The spare shed of a small, white home along Indiana 9 stood like an island as flood waters inched closer to the highway, threatening to drown the main artery.

Portions of Chestnut and Berry streets were also under water.

In response to the threat of city-wide flooding, city officials established evacuation centers at the high school auditorium and the community center. City officials also offered sand bags and bagging materials through the street and water departments for those residents worried about property damage.

The threat of excessive flooding was more imminent as city officials worried that the Pipe Creek dike would not hold the waterway.

According to Mayor Jack Woods, 13 Alexandria residents living on flood plains were called and warned about the threat of flooding.

The Washington Street bridge was inches from being engulfed by the fast-moving waters beneath. Down the road, low-lying parts of Washington were closed near the water treatment plant as water pushed up onto the roadway.

A collection of Alexandria firefighters who waded through the rushing flood waters of Pipe Creek to check the status of the dike determined Wednesday afternoon that the structure would hold.

Police Chief Brian Burnett warned that the failure of the dike would lead to the flooding of Indiana 9 within 15 minutes.

Fortunately, the dike held, and flooding was kept to a minimal.

The threat of flooding on Indiana 9 was ever-present as it passed Washington Street. At 2 p.m. Wednesday, water gathering in the tree line to the east of the highway rose with the flooding across the street. The roadway was inches from being overcome before the rain finally subsided.

The Village Pantry on Indiana 9 closed shop around noon on Wednesday as the Washington Street flood waters crept closer to the store's entrance. Village Pantry employees hastily piled sand bags against the doorway and moved merchandise to avoid damage. With only two dry parking spaces left in the lot, and the promise of more rain on its way, the store was shut down. A hand-scribbled note hung in the entrance to the darkened store, explaining the unforeseen closure.

The store and its merchandise were spared as waters receded late Wednesday afternoon.

The impact on the rest of Madison County paled in comparison to Alexandria's saturated streets, but some county roads were underwater most of Wednesday.

In Pendleton, gates were thrown shut, closing off the section of County Road 950 South known as "the fjord." Scott Harless of the Madison County Highway Department said the fjord was five feet deep at times.

A drainage ditch spilled over on McArthur Court in Anderson, and a curve of Grand Avenue's winding path was engulfed in Anderson as the White River climbed its banks, reaching 11 feet. With Killbuck Creek flooding near Moonsville, two county roads were also closed early.

The water-logged landscape of Madison County was expected to freeze today as a mix of snow and rain enters the area. Alternating sheets of snow and rain are expected to continue into Saturday with temperatures in the 30s and 40s.

Alex residents affected by Wednesday's flooding should call the City of Alexandria at (765) 724-4633 for assistance.

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batesvilleheraldtribune.com

What's up with what's coming down?

By Jamie Hergott and Brian Kern
Hendricks County Flyer (Avon, Ind.)

AVON, Ind.— There's an old adage that if you want the weather to change in Indiana, just stick around. State and local officials aren't going anywhere.

"We're watching very closely right now," said John Erickson, senior public information officer for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Erickson says that while the only county under any kind of heightened weather alert is White County, water is hard to predict and his staff is keeping a close eye on the entire state.

"The rain is coming and snow is melting and we just don't know how that's going to effect where it will pool," Erickson said. "Water is just so insidious. It can creep everywhere."

The National Weather Service issued several watches for Hendricks County lasting through this morning, including a flood warning (meaning floods are imminent or have been reported) and a flood watch (meaning the current forecast suggests ideal conditions for a flood). These issues are in effect until 10:15 a.m. today.

Erickson says that National Weather Service staff has been in contact with counties and various local agencies to talk about issues, needs, or any assistance that may be needed. But the authority to ask for that assistance and take action lies with the county officials.

“While we ourselves may not actually provide the aid, we are here to assist to help at whatever level they need,” Erickson said. “We will connect them with trained officials who can help.”

In Hendricks County, Emergency Management Agency officials say they have adequate resources to mass produce sand bags, should the need arise, and at least one report cautioned that flooding could reach levels comparable to the high waters that greeted the area back in January 2005.

But for now, town officials say it’s really just a waiting game.

“Generally in Avon we don’t have too many problems,” Avon Public Works Director Ryan Cannon said. “Still, when you have frozen and saturated ground in the winter time combined with heavy rains, it’s certainly something we pay attention to.”

Plainfield Town Manager Rich Carlucci echoed similar sentiments.

“Creeks are running pretty high and we have sand bags ready if we need them, but it has dissipated,” he said.

Kit Werbe, spokeswoman for the Indiana branch of the American Red Cross, says that the agency is ready in the event of severe flooding in the area.

“I’ve received several inquiries about our preparation and the answer is that we’re always prepared,” Werbe said. “We’re not really doing anything different or out of the norm, but the minute something does happen we’ll spring into action.”

The NWS says that two to three inches of rain total is expected to fall locally, and the rain is falling on partially frozen ground. This means the rain will not be able to soak in and may be the cause of some flooding. The NWS recommends that residents continue to practice caution.

Erickson says there are several simple things that can make a big difference in one’s safety during a time of questionable weather.

“Use common sense,” he said. “If there’s fog, slow down. Leave yourself extra time. Don’t drive like it’s a clear, sunny day. As far as standing water, be cautious. Watch for other drivers more than you normally would. And keep your lights on.”

Jamie Hergott and Brian Kern write for the Hendricks County Flyer in Avon, Ind.

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2/6/2008 6:16:00 AM



Commission short of funds for repairs to river levees

HEBRON - The Kankakee River Basin Commission does not have enough money to pay for repairs to four levees that broke during last month's flooding.

The commission has about \$50,000 to cover such emergencies, but the bills for fixing the levees total about \$85,000, said commission director Jody Melton.

"The river basin has a little money to cover emergencies, but I don't have enough to pay for all these bills. The bills are still coming in," Melton told the Post-Tribune.

He said he had requested help from state and federal agencies, including the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Between 3 and 5 inches of rain fell Jan. 7-8. Two of the river's levees broke in Porter County, both east of Indiana 49. One broke in LaPorte County, east of LaCrosse. The last break, west of Indiana 49 in Jasper County, was about 75 feet wide and caused water to gush into about a square mile of farmland.

The levees have been repaired and should hold even if river levels go up as a result of more rain or snowfall this week, Melton said.

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2/5/2008 2:02:00 PM



High water prompts voluntary evacuations in 2 Indiana counties

DELPHI - Officials in two Indiana counties were urging people who live along the Tippecanoe River to evacuate Tuesday.

Heavy rains overnight prompted officials to open the floodgates on Carroll County's Oakdale dam, releasing water at over 18,000 cubic feet per second, according the Sheriff's Department. Those downstream of the dam were being asked to leave voluntarily, said Carroll County Emergency Management director Dave McDowell.

``We began warning some of the residents early last evening when we got word from the National Weather Service that we were going to have lots of rain,' McDowell said. ``Early this morning Carroll County Sheriff's deputies began driving up and down the roads waking people up with sirens and public address announcements.'

McDowell said many people were still out of the area due to the January flooding.

In White County, emergency officials were calling for the evacuation of Diamond Point downstream of the Norway Dam due to rising floodwaters.

The American Red Cross is setting up evacuation centers in Delphi and Monticello.

Many of January's flood victims still trying to rebuild now face high water again, although officials do not expect it to be as bad.

Donna Marshall, who lives just below Oakdale Dam, told the Journal & Courier of Lafayette that she had nightmares overnight after seeing flash flood warnings on television.

``I didn't sleep good. ... I kept thinking I was hearing water under the house. Of course, I didn't,' Marshall said. ``I didn't realize how much the last one affected me. I kept thinking we were going to get swept off.'

Authorities in several other northern Indiana counties have closed roads due to high water. Flood warnings and watches were issued for much of the state as storms bringing heavy rain were expected to move through.

President Bush declared nine northern Indiana counties, including Carroll, disaster areas due to flooding from heavy rains in January.

Flooding last month killed three people, including two children, and caused more than \$33 million damage to hundreds of homes.

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journalgazette.net
600 W. Main St. Fort Wayne, Ind. 46802

Last updated: February 6, 2008 5:57 p.m.

Area rivers begin flooding

By Dan Stockman

A school bus fords high water across Bass Road on Wednesday morning as an Allen County Sheriff's Department officer watches.

Northeast Indiana has been covered with a rash of road closures but appears to have escaped serious river flooding.

The National Weather Service at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday updated its river forecasts for the region, lowering expected crest levels dramatically.

The St. Marys River in Fort Wayne, for example, had been expected to hit 19.6 feet, which would have topped the 19.1 feet in the January 2005 flood and nearly matched the Flood of '82. Now, the river is expected to crest at only 17.4 feet, which should cause few problems. The crest is expected about 1 a.m. Thursday.

The Eel River in North Manchester, however, was 5 feet over flood stage and rising. The East Side Trailer Court, on South Mill Street along the river, has been closed and about 32 residents of 14 trailers have been evacuated, police said. The evacuations started just before 6 a.m.

At 9 a.m., the river was at 14 feet, lower than the 15.2 foot forecast, but still the third-highest level ever recorded. The record flood there is 15.5 feet, set in 1913. The American Red Cross is standing by to help if further evacuations are needed.

The flood warning has been extended for the Little River north of Huntington until Thursday evening. At noon Wednesday, the water was 2.4 feet over flood stage, at 17.4 feet, creating moderate flooding.

For most of the region, however, the problem is standing water. So many roads are closed in Whitley County, officials said, that they have run out of signs to warn motorists of flooded roads. In Kosciusko County, 18 roads are closed because of flooding; 74 others have high water.

In Fort Wayne, even though the rivers are not expected to cause major problems, city officials are preparing for the possibility waters could go higher. Crews were building a clay dike along Thieme Drive at the end of West Berry Street on Wednesday morning, and flood engineers were watching low-lying areas carefully.

The flood gate at the end of Greenwood Avenue has been closed and officials are dispatching pumps throughout the city to drain storm sewers.

In the Junk Ditch area, nearly every road has water across it – either standing water or areas where Junk Ditch has left its banks – and the ditch is flowing backward into cornfield south of Covington Road and west of Ardmore Avenue.

The National Weather Service in northeast Indiana says Fort Wayne set a record for rainfall Tuesday, with 1.9 inches.

This breaks the previous record of 0.96 inches set in 1908.

Additional rainfall of 1 to 2 inches, or snow, is possible tonight .

dstockman@jg.net

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Light Snow Replaces Heavy Rain

[YouNewsTV™](#)

Story Published: Feb 7, 2008 at 7:41 AM EST

Story Updated: Feb 7, 2008 at 7:41 AM EST

By Chris Daniels

A powerful storm pulled away from the region Wednesday. This weather system caused the destructive tornado's in the Mid South, heavy snow in the upper Midwest, and the large amount of rain for Northeast Indiana and Northwest Ohio.

A series of weak weather systems will cross the area the next few days, but only light precipitation is expected. A strong cold front will swing through the region Saturday, and bring cold, but dry weather by the end of the weekend.

Many area rivers will crest later today and Friday. With the somewhat dry weather forecast, most areas that are flooded today should show improvement during the weekend. Indiana's Newscenter will watch carefully this weather situation with exclusive Pinpoint VIPIR HD.

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Severe storms last night in Indiana may have included tornados

[YouNewsTV™](#)

Story Published: Feb 6, 2008 at 7:55 AM EST

Story Updated: Feb 6, 2008 at 11:47 AM EST

By Chris Daniels

The National Weather Service is investigating storm damage in Putnam, Greene, Jackson and Decatur counties to see if any tornadoes touched down. No major injuries were reported.

In Putnam County west of Indianapolis, the storm tore the roof off a fire station in Bainbridge and destroyed its radio tower. Barns and mobile homes also were damaged, along with several utility trailers.

In Greene County, southwest of Bloomington, the sheriff's department said roofs were blown off several houses in Bloomfield. Officers reported a large amount of debris in trees as well as downed trees and power lines. The Sheriff's department says the damage resembled that of a tornado.

Meanwhile, forecasters with Indiana's NewsCenter say another low pressure system, and another seperate weather disturbance will bring additional rain to the area today. An area of moderate rain moved through Tuesday night. Some severe weather had occured, but was confined to Central and Southern Indiana.

Today rain will increase from the Southwest, but the rain is expected to stay on the light side. As the low pressure system moves futher to the east, slightly colder air will spill in. This will change the rain over to some light snow, but not much accumulation is expected. Travel may be difficult from South Bend to Chicago today, where heavy snow is expected.

Most of Northern Indiana remain under flood warnings today, where some street flooding has already been reported. Many rivers will crest above flood stage during the next two days. Indiana's Newscenter will continue to monitor this weather system with our exclusive PINPOINT VIPIR HD.

The Office of Homeland Security has canceled the February Emergency Warning Siren test that was scheduled for noon today due to the weather.

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Kankakee River causes flood worries

BY MELANIE CSEPIGA

Times Correspondent | Thursday, February 07, 2008 | [2 comment\(s\)](#)

SHELBY | The National Weather Service is predicting the Kankakee River will be more than 12 feet deep by Saturday in Shelby, exerting more pressure on levees and riverbanks already strained from last month's floods.

The rising water has some local river experts concerned the levees could begin to break, threatening heavier flooding in this small unincorporated community and in nearby Sumava Resorts.

"Yesterday, the National Weather Service was saying 11 feet. Last night, they went to 12, and this morning they're talking 12.4 feet, which is where we were three weeks ago," said Jody Melton, director of the Kankakee River Basin Commission.

The commission "and the counties are tapped out of funds for any emergencies, so the State (Department of) Homeland Security and the (U.S. Army) Corps (of Engineers) are going to have to step up if it gets worse."

Should the Kankakee reach the levels predicted by the weather service, Melton said there are bound to be problems.

"The levee repairs that were made in Porter, Jasper and LaPorte (Counties) should be fine, but we'll probably see some additional breaks if the river does go back to those levels," Melton said. "I have no idea where, at this point."

From his perch on the river and the bayou in the Shady Shores Subdivision in Shelby, Kendall Portlock did not seem concerned Wednesday.

"It's come up some, but it's looking pretty good now," he said.

The unofficial gatekeeper in the area, Portlock monitors the gate that controls the bayou water level and makes adjustments when necessary.

"I suspect Shady Shores will need to prop up their sandbags, and Sumava will need to be attentive to their levees," Melton said. "Thank God their pump is in."

West of Shelby in unincorporated Sumava Resorts, a fire destroyed the 1950s-era pump that maintains acceptable water levels in the bayou there. A new pump was installed and went online Monday.

"So far, so good," Carl Studer, of Sumava Resorts, said Wednesday of how residents there are faring. "We have sandbags ready just in case, like always."

Meanwhile, other regions of Indiana were seeing flooding related to heavy winter precipitation as well.

The U.S. Geological Survey reported that 53 of its stream-flow gauging stations that monitor rising waters throughout the state were above flood stage Wednesday.

Roads restrictions, closures

-- Interstate 94 lanes are being restricted between Ind. 53 in Lake County and Ind. 49 in Porter County while crews fill in potholes. Up to two lanes at a time may be restricted as crews work to fill as many potholes as weather allows.

-- In Jasper County, U.S. 231 from Ind. 6 to Rensselaer was closed.

-- In Newton Newton, Ind. 55 between Ind. 6 and Ind. 114 was closed.

Source: Indiana Department of Transportation

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Rivers start receding in flooded areas in Indiana

| Thursday, February 07, 2008 | [No comments posted.](#)

MONTICELLO, Ind. - Rivers were cresting Thursday in many flooded areas across northern Indiana, although it could be a week or more before the water fully recedes.

The Tippecanoe River was down nearly 2 feet from the major flood stage of 15 feet it reached on Wednesday about 20 miles north of Lafayette. The same stretch of river saw major flooding last month.

Several state highways remained closed at spots in northern Indiana after up to 3 inches of rain this week combined with melting snow. Fort Wayne had many streets under water but officials there called off their request for volunteers to help fill sandbags.

Floodwaters from the Wabash River surrounded several properties in the Lafayette area, where National Weather Service hydrologist Al Shipe said the river was expected to crest on Thursday.

As that crest moves downstream, more flooding was expected between Lafayette and Terre Haute.

"There will be a lot of roads under water and some agricultural levees are going to overtopped," Shipe said.

The floodwaters along the Tippecanoe a few miles south of Monticello surrounded Dennis Kellar's home just weeks after the flood that forced him to replace walls, flooring and kitchen cabinets.

"Unbelievable," he said. "I spent \$17,500 out of my pocket to get back in my home. ... We'll probably have to do it again."

Meanwhile, state conservation officers planned to use a crane Thursday to remove a car submerged in a quarry near Kentland.

Two bodies were believed to be in the car, which was upside down in about 56 feet of water that flooded the normally empty quarry, Conservation Officer Matt Tholen said. Poor visibility and the water's 36-degree temperature made it too dangerous to send divers in to retrieve the vehicle, he said. Officials believe the car plunged into the quarry Tuesday night.

Shipe said it could be more than a week before many northern Indiana rivers return to their normal banks and that flooding was expected along the Wabash River as the crest moves south of Terre Haute toward Vincennes.

"The lowlands will be completely gone, they'll be completely under water," he said. "If you are on the wrong side of a levee down there, you're going to be wet."

A service of the Associated Press(AP)

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February 7, 2008

Flood warnings cover most of saturated state

By Kevin O'Neal

kevin.oneal@indystar.com

February 7, 2008

Snow, warm temperatures and heavy rain have created the soggy conditions that led to flooding over two-thirds of the state.

Nearly all of Indiana is under a flood warning for the second time in a month, as high water is expected on every substantial river and creek, including White River.

"It'll be out of its banks in the Indianapolis area, but by next week it'll be gone," said Al Shipe, National Weather Service hydrologist.

Last week's heaviest snow fell in north-central Indiana, where the ground already was saturated and frozen, Shipe said. Then temperatures over 60 degrees in Indianapolis on Monday and Tuesday combined with heavy rain -- 1.83 inches in Indianapolis on Tuesday, the rainiest day of the year -- to set up the flooding.

Like last month, the worst flooding is expected in the area of the Tippecanoe River north of Lafayette, although high water has been reported in Fort Wayne, Elkhart, Bluffton and Wabash, where the Indiana Department of Transportation had to close some low-lying roads because of flooding.

In Indianapolis, the weather service was keeping track of White River's rising levels.

The weather service's river monitors showed White River at the 82nd Street bridge had passed the 10-foot flood stage. Waters there had risen through 13 feet Wednesday and were expected to crest at 15 feet Friday.

The river also was past its 6-foot flood stage at Ravenswood and was expected to crest at 9.4 feet Friday. But at the Raymond Street measuring station, the river on Wednesday was at 14.3 feet, below flood stage, and was expected to crest barely above flood stage at 16.1 feet today.

In Hamilton County, the Emergency Management Agency has made sandbags available, but only 300 have been given out, compared with 6,000 in the March 2007 flood, said Arvin Copeland, director of administration for the agency.

High water on Wednesday forced INDOT to close Cicero Road in Noblesville between Logan Street and Field Drive. The road is the only Indianapolis-area state highway where flooding has been a problem, said Will Wingfield, department spokesman.

The Hamilton County Highway Department closed several other county roads Wednesday, including:
Casey Road between 193rd and 186th streets.
193rd Street between Spring Mill and Six Points roads.
Riverwood Drive in the Riverwood subdivision
Riverwood Avenue between 211th and 221st streets.
Six Points between 216th Street and Ind. 38.

Edith Avenue between River Road and 206th Street.
246th between Cornell and Ray Parker roads.

The weather service forecast calls for a slight chance of flurries and rain today through Saturday. By nightfall, expect partly cloudy skies and bittercold, with a low of 9 degrees. The high on Sunday will be 20.

Call Star reporter Kevin O'Neal at (317) 444-2760.

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2:59 PM February 6, 2008

Lafayette region eyes rising rivers

By **CURT SLYDER** and **MICHAEL MALIK**

Lafayette Journal & Courier

February 6, 2008

As floodwaters continued to rise, and Tippecanoe and surrounding counties stayed on point for widespread flood warnings, it was clear this morning that familiarity does breed contempt.

"We're a little more used to what's going on, but it's no more fun and no more amusing," Dave McDowell, director of the Carroll County Emergency Management Agency, said this morning.

A month after floodwaters from the Tippecanoe River, the Wabash River and assorted streams ravaged a nine-county region, evacuated homeowners and emergency crews were dealing with another round of major flooding.

The worst of it could still be coming.

Near Monticello at 10 a.m. today, the Norway Dam operator was reporting a flow of 22,145 cubic feet per second from the dam's floodgates. At the same time, the Oakdale Dam had a flow of 25,619 cubic feet per second. Both dams are on the Tippecanoe River.

According to the National Weather Service, a major flood stage begins with flow exceeding 22,000 cubic feet per second. During the January flood, peak outflow at Oakdale was above 31,000 cubic feet per second.

All that - along with more rain or snow in today's forecast, heavy rains over the last two days and a rapid snowmelt on Monday - doesn't bode well for areas downstream along the Tippecanoe and Wabash rivers.

Emergency officials throughout the area were preparing for more flooding today.

"This will be the worst flooding we've had since January 2005 on the Wabash," said Mark Kirby, Tippecanoe County Emergency Management director. Benton County officials put the county under a level one warning this morning until noon today. That meant travel on county roads was restricted to emergency personnel only. That warning was downgraded to a level two emergency warning. That allows only essential travel, including to and from work, to obtain medication or to seek shelter.

Homes flooded along the Tippecanoe River during the January floods are getting a second round of problems.

"Not as many people are displaced this time," McDowell said. "We moved two people from the flood zone yesterday. Most of the people were out already from the earlier flooding."

Downstream, Kirby and other Tippecanoe County officials were keeping their eyes on the Wabash. The National Weather Service is predicting a crest of 25.1 feet in Lafayette sometime Thursday night, Kirby said. With more rain or snow in the forecast today, "It wouldn't surprise me to see them bump that up some more," he said.

As of this morning, the Wabash River was at 21.01 feet. Flood stage is 11 feet.

If the Wabash River does crest at 25.1 feet, that would exceed the July 2003 flood, when the river crested at 25.05 feet. It would then become the biggest Wabash River flooding in Lafayette since February 1959's crest of 25.3 feet.

According to the National Weather Service, if the Wabash reaches 24 feet, low commercial, industrial and residential areas of Lafayette and West Lafayette would begin to flood. This includes Levee Plaza and Williamsburg apartments.

Businesses along Canal and Sycamore streets in Lafayette would also begin to flood. Evacuations would be necessary from river cabins, residences along North River Road near Wabash Valley Hospital, and North 9th Street. North River Road, Happy Hollow Road and North River Road would flood.

Kirby expects the flood to affect properties along those areas as well as Fort Ouiatenon, Wabash Avenue and possibly others before it's through. "People should start preparing now for at least a 25-foot crest on the Wabash," Kirby said.

Earlier -- Powerful winds tear across Indiana Associated Press

BAINBRIDGE, Ind. — A powerful line of thunderstorms marched across Indiana, damaging homes, knocking down trees and power lines and tearing the roof off a fire station. But flooding could cause the most problems throughout the state as the National Weather Service was warning today that the Wabash, Tippecanoe and other major rivers will spill over their banks. In Putnam County west of Indianapolis, the storm tore the roof off a fire station in Bainbridge and destroyed its radio tower Tuesday night. Barns and mobile homes also were damaged, along with several utility trailers.

In Greene County, southwest of Bloomington, the sheriff's department said roofs were blown off several houses in Bloomfield. Officers reported a large amount of debris in trees as well as downed trees and power lines. The sheriff's department said the damage resembled that of a tornado.

An 80 mph wind gust was reported in Clinton in Vermillion County. Trees and power lines were reported down in Terre Haute.

The National Weather Service was investigating storm damage in Putnam, Greene, Jackson and Decatur counties to see if any tornadoes touched down. No major injuries were reported.

The storms followed unseasonably high daytime temperatures in the 60s, and were generated by the same system that produced tornadoes that were blamed for nearly 50 deaths in the South.

Rain up to 3 inches and melting snow are causing flooding problems in some of the same areas hit hard last month.

Fountain County emergency management officials went door-to-door warning residents along the Wabash River that if the level continues to rise they may have to evacuate.

"It is a situation that those people in that area should monitor closely in the next two days," said Al Shipe, a hydrologist with the weather service in Indianapolis. "If it does get 2 or 3 feet higher than it did in January, we're looking at significant flooding."

He said the flooding would be the worst between Lafayette and Terre Haute.

The Wabash swelled to just over 22 feet last month, and Shipe said the river would likely crest between 24 and 25 feet. It was approaching 20 feet by late this morning, he said.

The weather service said the Wabash could reach its highest flood level since January 2005 when it crested at 25.03 feet and that major flooding was expected along the Tippecanoe River.

The Wabash in 2005 broke through levees in at least two places in a rural area south of Terre Haute. In Sullivan County, several residents were flown by helicopter out of their homes because of flood water.

Indiana Conservation Officers were searching a quarry today for a vehicle that may have plunged into the icy water during the night south of Indiana 24 east of Kentland. Portions of four state roads in northwestern counties were closed due to high water, the state said.

Cresting on many of the rivers will occur over the weekend into next week, the weather service said.



Officials in Carroll and White counties in northern Indiana also urged people along the Tippecanoe to voluntarily evacuate their homes.

[*Back to Indianapolis*](#)



Storms Included Tornado, Weather Service Says

High Water Might Have Contributed To Death, Authorities Say

POSTED: 7:17 pm EST February 6, 2008

UPDATED: 8:09 pm EST February 6, 2008

BLOOMFIELD, Ind. -- The Tuesday night storms that damaged homes and cut power to thousands included at least one tornado, the National Weather Service said Wednesday.

In Greene County, southwest of Bloomington, a tornado cut a 4-mile path through Bloomfield, blowing the roofs off several houses and downing trees and power lines. More than 12 homes and buildings were damaged, and one home was destroyed, officials said.

Herman L. Walters, 82, was watching television in the living room of his Bloomfield home, listening to hail pelt the windows, before two trees crashed into his house in less than five minutes.

"I said to myself, 'How long will the windows take that hail?' About that time, the (first) tree came over," Walters told [6News' Ben Morrison](#).

No injuries were reported in Bloomfield, but high water might have contributed to at least one death in Newton County, where divers found a vehicle under 56 feet of water in the quarry Wednesday. The car may have plunged into the icy water during the night east of Kentland in northwestern Indiana. Indiana Conservation officers said they believed at least one person was in the vehicle.

The weather service also was investigating storm damage in Putnam, Jackson and Decatur counties to see if any other tornadoes touched down.

In Putnam County, the roof of a Bainbridge Volunteer Fire Department building was torn off and the station's tower was toppled. Bainbridge is about 35 miles west of downtown Indianapolis.

Significant damage also was done to barns and mobile homes in the Bainbridge area.

High winds also caused some damage in Decatur County. A trailer was blown off its foundation on the south side of the city. No one was home at the time.

"I feel lucky. I feel like I've been spared," said Herbert Sexton, who lives nearby. "For that 30 to 45 seconds ... I was doing some quick praying."

Trees and power lines were also downed across a large swath of Decatur County.

The storms, while strong, left Indiana relatively unscathed compared to the [damage done Tuesday in several southern states](#), where storms killed dozens of people.

Wabash, Tippecanoe Rivers Spilling Over Banks

Flooding could cause even more damage as the weather service was warning Wednesday that the Wabash, Tippecanoe and other major rivers are spilling over their banks. High waters might have contributed to at least one death when a vehicle plunged into a water-filled quarry.

Rain up to 3 inches and melting snow were causing rivers to spill into some of the same low-lying areas hit hard last month.

Fountain County emergency management officials went door-to-door warning residents along the Wabash River that if the level continues to rise, they may have to evacuate. Officials in Carroll and White counties in northern Indiana also urged people along the Tippecanoe to voluntarily evacuate their homes.

The Wabash level near Lafayette in late afternoon was 22.07 feet, said John Kwiatkowski, weather service meteorologist.

The river swelled over its banks to just over 22 feet last month. Al Shipe, a hydrologist with the weather service, said it would likely crest between 24 and 25 feet. If the river gets 2 or 3 feet higher than it did in January, there could be significant flooding, he said, the worst between Lafayette and Terre Haute.

Kwiatkowski said smaller streams would go down, but those who live near larger rivers would see problems get worse. Portions of several state roads were closed in northwestern Indiana, and countless county roads were under water.

The weather service said the Wabash could reach its highest flood level since January 2005 when it crested at 25.03 feet and that major flooding was expected along the Tippecanoe River.

The Wabash in 2005 broke through levees in at least two places in a rural area south of Terre Haute. In Sullivan County, several residents were flown by helicopter out of their homes because of flood water.

Cresting on many of the rivers will occur over the weekend into next week, the weather service said.

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Floodwaters Block Numerous Roads North Of Indy

White River Expected To Crest On Friday

POSTED: 10:20 am EST February 7, 2008

UPDATED: 12:21 pm EST February 7, 2008

NOBLESVILLE, Ind. -- Numerous roads remain blocked in Hamilton County as floodwaters continue to rise along the White River.

Motorists have had a hard time navigating around high waters for the past couple of days. Perhaps the most disruptive road closure is Indiana 19, between Field Drive and Logan Street. As many as 10,000 vehicles use that portion of road on an average day, according to officials. Indiana 19 connects Noblesville with Cicero, Arcadia and other communities to the north. Other blocked roads include:

- Allisonville Road, between Wellington Parkway and Westminster Drive
- Riverwood Avenue, north of 206th Street
- Riverwood Drive along the river
- 166th Street, north of Union Chapel Road
- Mill Creek Road, north of 32
- Boulder Drive
- Edith Avenue

Officials said some motorists are disregarding high water signs.

"I noticed several road blockings this morning, and people were going around them," said Arvin Copeland, of Hamilton County Emergency Management. "My advice is to pay attention to the road markings and go opposite directions."

Floodwaters are not expected to begin receding in Hamilton County until Friday, with a crest expected at 19 feet at about 7 a.m.. Officials anticipated that many of the blocked roads would reopen over the weekend.

As much as 4 inches of rain pelted the area earlier this week after recent snowmelt and heavy rains.

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Flooding May Be Worse Next Week

By AP and Network Reports
2/6/2008

The rain continues to fall on parts of the area and National Weather Service meteorologists say we may be in worse shape next week.

John Kwiatkowski with NWS says another warm-up is on the way sometime next week. This will come after more expected snow. Meaning, more water.

Kwiatkowski says a few days of cold weather will actually help stop the flooding by freezing the water and keeping it in one spot.

Kwiatkowski says areas received between one and three inches of rain, on top of melting snow from earlier this week.

A flood warning remains in effect until early Thursday. That includes the Wabash, Tippecanoe, and White rivers.

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Officials warn of flooding following severe storms

Posted: Feb 6, 2008 07:06 AM EST

COVINGTON, Ind. (AP) - The National Weather Service is warning residents along the Wabash River to watch for flooding over the next two or three days.

The Wabash could rise to its highest level since January 2005. Hydrologist Al Shipe says significant flooding could occur between Lafayette and Terre Haute.

Up to three inches of rain and melting snow are causing flooding problems in some of the same areas of Indiana hit hard by flooding last month.

Fountain County emergency management officials were warning residents along the Wabash River that if the level continues to rise they may have to evacuate.

Officials in Carroll and White counties also urged people along the Tippecanoe to voluntarily evacuate their homes.

Several state roads are closed due to high water.

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It's deja vu for some flood victims

Posted: Feb 7, 2008 01:54 AM EST

Updated: Feb 7, 2008 06:11 AM EST

[Rich Van Wyk](#)/Eyewitness News

Tippecanoe County - Flood waters are still rising across Indiana and won't peak until Thursday and even this weekend.

There's now a level-two flood warning in Benton, Pulaski and Elkhart Counties. Starke, Huntington and White Counties are under a watch.

The Wabash River looks more like a lake these days. It's overtaken Tippecanoe County roads and is closing in on homes.

The possibility of water rescues and evacuations are among the many concerns of the county's Emergency Management Director, Mark Kirby.

"We already have problems," said Kirby. "The ground is saturated. A lot of people haven't got back into their homes from the last floods. It is a combination of problems."

By Sunday morning, problems are expected along roughly 100 miles of the Wabash River from north of Lafayette all the way to Terre Haute. These areas will see extensive flooding. It's expected to be the worst in three years.

The National Weather Service says the Wabash will crest Thursday morning in Lafayette nearly a foot lower than first predicted. That will spare low lying areas of the city that typically flood.

In Carroll County, hundreds of homes are underwater for the second time in a month. Officials don't want to speculate on the amount of damage.

"I've seen so much in the last month. I try not to guess. I sit back and wait to see it," said Carroll County Emergency Management Director Dave McDowell.

There have been only a few evacuations. Most residents haven't had time to finish cleaning up, rebuild and move back from the previous flood. Now homeowners like Cari Henderson will have to start over.

"It is easier this time," she said. "You're already out of your house. You've lost everything you own. It's getting wet again. It is going to take a lot longer to dry out."

The National Weather Service warns flooding in some areas of the state could last another two weeks.

Along with the brutal winds - brutal temperatures. The National Weather Service says that hard freeze will slow some of the flooding, but will also slow the cleanup in areas already flooded.

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Delphi shelter open again

February 7, 2008

DELPHI -- The Tippecanoe Chapter of the American Red Cross had closed its flood shelter Wednesday in Delphi but reopened it later that night, citing a new demand.

The shelter at First Presbyterian Church was opened Tuesday when heavy rainfall hit the area.

"We had 10 come in and none of them stayed overnight," said Chris Brady of the Tippecanoe Chapter of the American Red Cross.

That led the Red Cross to close the shelter.

But the organization had to reopen it at 9 p.m. Wednesday.

Brady, the emergency services director, said the Red Cross also is ready to open other shelters if necessary.

"We're not out of the woods yet. The Wabash is expected to crest ... which may prompt the need for additional emergency assistance," Brady said.

First Presbyterian Church, 213 S. Indiana St., has clothing for flood victims.

Residents needing empty sandbags can contact the Tippecanoe County Emergency Management Agency at 742-1334.

All Red Cross disaster assistance is provided to victims free of charge.

-- Bob Scott/bscott@journalandcourier.com

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Flood update: River level close to cresting

STAFF REPORTS

February 7, 2008

According to various sources, water levels coming off the Norway and Oakdale Dams along the Tippecanoe River appear to have peaked on Wednesday.

According to National Weather Service hydrologist Al Shipe, flow through the Oakdale Dam's floodgates peaked at 25,938 cubic feet per second around noon Wednesday.

According to the Carroll County Sheriff's Department, flow was 22,480 cubic feet per second at 6 a.m. today, while flow off the Norway Dam was 19,302 cubic feet per second.

During the January flood, peak outflow at Oakdale was above 31,000 cubic feet per second.

Shipe said the Wabash River in Lafayette was at 24.2 feet at 7 a.m. today and still rising. Flood stage is 11 feet.

Shipe expects the crest to come sometime this afternoon at 24.5 feet. "That will make it the biggest flood there since 2005," he said.

Downstream, the Wabash is predicted to crest at 27.3 feet in Covington on Saturday. Flood stage there is 16 feet.

Area police departments reported few problems this morning associated with the flood.

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Flood update: Shelters empty, remain on standby

STAFF REPORTS

February 7, 2008

The Red Cross shelter in Delphi was scheduled to close at 10 a.m. today, said Ginger Kadlec of the Tippecanoe County chapter of the American Red Cross.

The shelter at First Presbyterian Church, 213 S. Indiana St., will remain on standby.

"Nobody stayed overnight. There doesn't seem to be a demand for it right now," Kadlec said this morning.

"We are remaining on standby. Our disaster teams are ready."

- The Red Cross shelter in Monticello closed Wednesday and also is on standby today, said Jill Baughman of the Cass/White County chapter of the American Red Cross.

The shelter is in Lake Shafer Christian Center, 1765 N. West Shafer Drive.

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Flood update: Unemployment benefits available after January flood

STAFF REPORTS

February 7, 2008

People who became unemployed as a result of the first round of severe storms and flooding which took place in northern Indiana in January may be eligible for special Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits.

To be eligible for assistance, workers or self-employed individuals must be unemployed as a result of the disaster in the federal disaster declaration area, which includes Tippecanoe, White, Carroll, Jasper, Pulaski, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton and Marshall counties.

The deadline for affected workers to file for benefits is March 7.

According to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, unemployment assistance is available to unemployed workers if, as a direct result of the storms and flooding:

- They no longer have a job, were unable to reach their place of employment or were to commence work but do not have a job or are unable to reach the job.
- Have become the primary means of support for the household because the head of the household died as a result of the disaster.

- Cannot work because of a disaster-related injury.

To file a claim or receive more information, visit the local WorkOne office.

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Flood update: Wabash projected crest downgraded to 24.2 feet

STAFF REPORTS

February 6, 2008

The National Weather Service is predicting the Wabash River in Lafayette will crest at 24.2 feet in Lafayette Thursday morning.

That's higher than January's 22.16 feet crest, but significantly lower than had been predicted earlier today.

Earlier today, it was predicted to crest at 25.1 feet on Thursday evening, which would have made it the most significant river flood Greater Lafayette has seen since 1959.

Mark Kirby, Tippecanoe County Emergency Management director, said that aside from some road floodings, this flood should cause few problems.

"The river will come up significantly overnight," he said, advising motorists to use caution.

Anyone who sees a impassable road that is in no way marked should dial 911, he said.

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Flood update: Wabash River level tops 24 feet

STAFF REPORTS

February 7, 2008

The Wabash River in Lafayette was at 24.26 feet at 8:15 a.m., according to Tippecanoe County Emergency Management director Mark Kirby.

"We're unsure if it has crested," he said.

According National Weather Service hydrologist Al Shipe earlier this morning, the crest was expected to be around 24.5 feet sometime today.

Kirby said the flood had surrounded several properties along Indiana 25 north of Lafayette, Sycamore Lane south of downtown Lafayette and other areas. But it's too early for any damage reports, he said.

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'It's kind of unreal'

Weather hammers homeowners long before they complete cleanup from January disaster

By CURT SLYDER
cslyder@journalandcourier.com

February 7, 2008

Dennis Kellar was all set to move back into his house today on Horseshoe Bend Road along the Tippecanoe River.

With help from family and a lot of friends, Kellar, who owns a home-repair business, got things back in order after January's flood. They replaced walls and flooring, kitchen cabinets and everything else up to 4 feet off the ground.

On Wednesday, though, he watched as water from the swollen Tippecanoe River threatened to engulf his home a second time in less than a month.

"Unbelievable," he said. "I spent \$17,500 out of my pocket to get back in my home. ... We'll probably have to do it again."

A month after floodwaters from the Tippecanoe River, the Wabash River and assorted streams ravaged a nine-county region -- and people's lives were getting back to normal -- the waters have come again.

And the water is expected to continue to rise today before rivers crest, keeping some people out of their homes and emergency management crews on edge.

"It's kind of unreal. We've lived here a little over 10 years and we'd never seen it as bad as it was the last time," said Donna Marshall, who lives just below the Oakdale Dam on the Tippecanoe River. "I'm hoping it doesn't get any higher, but we'll just have to wait and see."

Despite having just dealt with a major flood and being ready for it, this month's flood isn't any easier.

"We're a little more used to what's going on, but it's no more fun and no more amusing," said Dave McDowell, director of the Carroll County Emergency Management Agency.

In Tippecanoe County, emergency management officials were preparing for a Wabash River crest a bit higher than January's flood, but not enough to cause significant damage.

The National Weather Service was predicting the Wabash River in Lafayette to crest at 24.2 feet in Lafayette this morning. Flood level for the Wabash is 11 feet in Lafayette.

That's higher than January's 22.16-foot crest, but lower than the 25 feet that had been predicted earlier Wednesday. That would have made it the most significant river flood Greater Lafayette has seen since 1959.

An updated National Weather Service prediction shows the Wabash River cresting early Saturday morning at 26 feet in Fountain County. The flood level is 16 feet there.

Last month's flooding damaged at least 800 homes, according to the request Gov. Mitch Daniels sent to President Bush asking the area be declared a disaster.

At least 400 homes sustained major damage. Bush later declared a disaster and pledged \$33 million for relief.

On Barton Beach Road, Leo Bee borrowed a neighbor's canoe to evacuate friends from his home Wednesday evening after Wildcat Creek swallowed the entire road past the first bend.

"We are expecting to get a few feet of water in the basement," he said.

Dressed in a wet suit, Tippecanoe County Sheriff Tracy Brown cut a path along the submerged roadway for a department vehicle to pick up Mary Jenkins, Bee's 75-year-old stepmother who was still in the house.

In Carroll County, many of the homes along the Tippecanoe River that were flooded in January got flooded again, though it wasn't quite as bad as the first time.

"Not as many people are displaced this time," McDowell said.

"We moved two people from the flood zone (Tuesday). Most of the people were out already from the earlier flooding."

Mark Kirby, Tippecanoe County Emergency Management director, said that aside from some road flooding, this flood should cause few problems.

"The river will come up significantly overnight," he said Wednesday, advising motorists to use caution.

Anyone who sees a impassable road that is not marked should dial 911, he said.

Misti Alvarez is a leasing agent for Williamsburg on the Wabash, an apartment complex along North River Road in West Lafayette.

She advised people to move cars in the complex's parking lot away from the river. She said water is already seeping into the parking lot -- and that it's something that happens every year.

"We send out notices saying it's good to move your car," Alvarez said. "It's not going to get any higher than it has in the past."

Contributing: Brian Wallheimer, Michael Malik, Max Showalter, Eric Weddle/J&C

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Plenty of rubbish will be removed, but not soon

By MAX SHOWALTER
mshowalter@journalandcourier.com

February 7, 2008

Already swollen well out of its banks by a tandem of rainfall and runoff, the Wabash River is expected to crest in Lafayette at 1 p.m. today at more than 24 feet.

Flood stage is 11 feet.

As the river flows south, it will continue to carry huge logs, large amounts of discarded building materials and many other items that are remnants of damage that already has been done farther north in Carroll and White counties.

The river has flooded Shamrock Park on the south side of Lafayette and the Municipal Golf Course on the north side of the city.

"It covers most of the golf course, including many of the greens. We have done some preventative measures of moving equipment to higher ground," said Ted Bumbleburg, Lafayette Parks and Recreation superintendent.

"We'll have some debris we have to remove.

"It's cornstalks and tree limbs right now."

Bumbleburg anticipates building materials washed down the river from flooded areas also will find their way onto the 18-hole golf course.

The river level needs to drop to 17 feet before a pumping system can be used to rid the golf course of excess water.

It will also be a while before bridges over the Wabash can be inspected for possible damage.

"Most damage done to a bridge that goes over water isn't done over time.

"It could simply be the water rushing faster, washing away the sediment underneath," said Andy Dietrick, a spokesman for the Indiana Department of Transportation.

"As soon as it's safe to do so, our bridge inspectors will get out and see if there was any residual damage from the flooding."

The Tippecanoe County Soil and Water Conservation District has begun a riparian buffer project that can help prevent pollutants from eroding into the river when it floods.

"It's a program we're trying to install along the Wabash and tributaries of the Wabash," said Chris Remley, the county's Soil and Water Conservation District administrator.

"Basically, root systems from trees absorb a lot of water. It also gives better water quality and it encourages wildlife."

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Victims should keep track of old, new damage

By SOPHIA VORAVONG
svoravong@journalandcourier.com

February 7, 2008

As of Wednesday morning, floodwaters caused by melting snow and heavy rain had yet to creep into Carol Middleton's home on Tecumseh Bend Road.

But water from the rising Tippecanoe River was just 2feet away.

"I just can't believe this is going on again," said Middleton, who, along with her husband, has been living with her daughter since January flooding caused serious damage to their property.

"I just wish it would stop so I could go home."

As the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Small Business Administration and the Indiana Department of Homeland Security began this week opening Fixed Disaster Recovery Centers for victims of flooding in January, some of the same victims are dealing with damage again.

The Indiana Department of Homeland Security is expected to release information today to guide those residents in distinguishing between January flood damage and damage from this week.

"We still need to make some determinations about what needs to happen," Indiana Homeland Security spokesman John Erickson said. "The goal is to make a decision as soon as possible and see what the rules are. We will make a determination as soon as we can."

Middleton, who has not been home since floodwaters pushed her and her husband out, said she is concerned for neighbors who suffered significant loss and damage.

The Middletons lost everything in their garage, along with furniture and other items in their home.

They have looked into the prospect of getting federal aid but have not received a formal response.

"I have not been able to talk to any of my neighbors, though my husband has a bit," Middleton said.

"I would like to because some of them are really in a bad place now."

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Tippecanoe County repeats flooding

By Scott Mawhorter

Publication Date: 02/07/08

City Editor

For the second time in a month, Tippecanoe County has experienced a flooding emergency.

According to Dave Tucek, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service, the floods have been caused by a surge in rain waters in the past few days.

"We had anywhere from two to four inches of rain across northern and central Indiana," Tucek said. He said this, combined with the melted snow waters and unseasonably high temperatures, caused a great influx of flood waters.

However, the Tippecanoe County Red Cross has experience in dealing with floods at this point.

Amy Gamble, the volunteer services director at the Tippecanoe County chapter of the American Red Cross, said that although damage assessment is still being made, many families affected by the flood are the same ones who were affected by the floods a month ago.

Gamble said that the Red Cross is currently providing shelter and relief to victims of the flood, though the shelter was shut down due to no one requiring to stay overnight.

"We are on standby in case that is needed again," Gamble said.

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Benton County Commissioners Downgrade To Level Two Emergency

Updated: Feb 6, 2008 02:30 PM EST

Benton County is now at a LEVEL-2 Warning status through Friday February 8, 2008 12:00 Noon.

LEVEL-2 Warning

Conditions are threatening to safety of the public. Only essential travel is recommended (i.e. to and from work, emergency situations, ect.) Emergency action plans have been or should be implemented by businesses, schools, government agencies and other organizations.

Some roads may still have water covering them. Many county roads have damage from the recent flooding. Gravel roads are very soft. Paved roads may be undercut from the flowing water and could break away under load. Potholes are numerous. Drivers should use extreme caution when traveling.

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FEMA Recovery Centers Open in Five Counties

Updated: Feb 6, 2008 06:45 PM EST

Several Federal Disaster Recovery Centers are now open to help flood victims. Sites are located in Carroll, White, Jasper, Fulton and Elkhart Counties. These recovery sites provide a place for flood victims to talk face-to-face with FEMA representatives. For many, it also gives them hope that help is coming.

"They were just drying it out and getting ready to re-build it and then this happened, so that's the end of that," said flood victim Ken Conklin.

Carroll County Emergency Management Director David McDowell says many people in Carroll County have lost everything in their homes, plus their re-building supplies and are starting to get discouraged. "We sort of thought we were motoring ahead and were making some progress after the last flood and this one was really kind-of a kick in the stomach. So I think people are kind-of getting pessimistic."

FEMA Public Information Officer Sam Ventura says people can receive financial assistance by calling their 1-8 hundred number. But FEMA workers are also available to answer questions in person. "Come here, you don't need an appointment talk face to face with people, find out how your application is going any other questions you may have," said Ventura.

Ventura says people have until March 31st to call FEMA and report their damages. Ventura says if people qualify for assistance they will receive money. "The way it is if you have damages, the money will be there for you. You don't have to rush to get it or the money's gone. There's nothing that says, here's the end of the money," said Ventura.

McDowell expects the number of homes with flood damage to continue climbing. "I think we'll have different damage this time, this will be the same along with Tippe but we'll have some additional inland damage," said McDowell.

FEMA Representatives are encouraging people to register for assistance before coming into the Recovery Centers. They can do that by calling 1-800-621-3362. Recovery Centers are located at the Middle School Gym in Delphi, The Roy and Fern Tobias Center Library in Remington and the White County Emergency Management Office in Monticello.

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Flood Bill Passes House Committee

Updated: Feb 7, 2008 08:10 AM EST

A State bill to help flood victims re-build is one step closer to passing.

Now in Indiana, folks whose homes have been damaged at least 50 percent of its value are not able to rebuild.

But a bill by Senator Brandt Hershman could change that.

His bill would align the DNR with FEMA's regulations, and allow homes in a floodway to be rebuilt two feet above the 100-year flood level.

Today that bill passed through the House Natural Resource Committee.

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Flooding threatens several cities and towns

Associated Press - February 7, 2008 5:54 AM ET

Flooding caused by heavy rains and melting snow continues to threaten cities and towns across much of Indiana.

The National Weather Service has extended flood warnings for the Wabash, Tippecanoe and other major rivers through at least today. Some of the worst flooding is on the Tippecanoe River below the Oakdale Dam in Carroll, White and Tippecanoe counties.

High waters may have contributed to at least one death.

Divers found a vehicle under 56 feet of water in a quarry near Kentland yesterday. Conservation officers believe at least one person was in the vehicle, but they have not yet been able to recover it.

Up to 3 inches of rain this week and melting snow caused rivers to spill into some of the same low-lying areas hit hard by flooding last month.

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Rivers start receding in flooded areas

Associated Press - February 7, 2008 11:14 AM ET

MONTICELLO, Ind. (AP) - Rivers are cresting today in many flooded areas across northern Indiana, although it could be a week or more before the water fully recedes.

The Tippecanoe River is down nearly two feet from the major flood stage of 15 feet it reached yesterday about 20 miles north of Lafayette. The same stretch of river saw major flooding last month.

Several state highways remain closed after up to 3 inches of rain this week combined with melting snow. Many streets are under water in Fort Wayne but officials have called off their request for volunteers to help fill sandbags.

Floodwaters from the Wabash River surround several properties in the Lafayette area. The river is expected to crest there today.

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Tippecanoe County Flooding Forces Residents Out

Updated: Feb 6, 2008 08:22 PM EST

By: Renetta DuBose

Flooding has affected hundreds of people in surrounding counties. The waters continue to rise across Tippecanoe County pushing more and more people out of their homes. The biggest problem is the rising Wabash and Tippecanoe County Rivers. Tippecanoe County Emergency Management Director Mark Kirby said they've evacuated between 25 and 35 homes, which is typical for this area. But, he said if the Wabash reaches 24 feet, which the National Weather Services said could happen tomorrow, residents who normally aren't affected by the flood on North and South River Roads and Division Road will have to evacuate. Flood stage is 11-feet. Evacuation already took place at Capilano Estates Neighborhood in West Lafayette. Resident Dave Smith said he and his wife were shocked at the water that surrounded their home this morning.

"We woke up this morning to go out and get the newspaper and it was a lake. And I had no idea it was going to do that last night cause when we came home it didn't seem to be bad and it never dawned on me that we'd wake up and not be able to get out," said Dave Smith, a Capilano Estate resident.

Residents in the Capilano Estates Neighborhood contacted the Sheriff's Department around 3- 30 this morning. People living near the only entry and exit area were stuck inside by flood waters. Smith said many could not make it out to get to work and the recurring problem needs to be fixed.

"Let's try to find out what it is, where is this water coming from? Is it another addition? Or is it like how I feel, the drainage creek or ditch, is it so overgrown? I mean it only makes sense that if something's blocking it, the water's going to back up," said Smith.

Wabash Township Fire Chief James Glenna, who was at Capilano early this morning to assist residents, said those people living west of the entry way might be able to make it out, but others may not have that advantage.

"To the east of the entrance there is still about three feet of water over there. And the people that live in that area are just stuck at their homes until the water recedes," said James Glenna, Wabash Township Fire Department Chief.

"I'm afraid towards the evening, we're going to see the rivers continue to rise. Of course, it's been raining all day today. Precipitation has been predicted into the evening tonight. I think that's all going to add up to a great big mess," said Kirby.

Another problem with this weather is driving. Kirby said people on the roads need to obey all signs, even if they don't say the road is closed.

"If it just says high water, that's not an indication to just go around, just go through it and be careful. You need to turn around, especially after dark, its very hard to judge the depth of the water," said Kirby.

Kirby said it's dangerous to drive in the water even in the daylight because of the unknown debris that may be lurking underneath.

He said people also need to be aware of the possibility of the Wabash cresting tomorrow. This could prevent some people from making it home after work.

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Chronicle-Tribune

NO PLACE TO GO

Some county roads flooded, keeping some from their homes

BY ANDREA HIRSCH

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Article published Feb 7, 2008

The Mississinewa River in Marion is expected to crest at 13.9 feet this morning, said Michael Skipper, meteorologist for the National Weather Service of Northern Indiana.

The river was at a moderate flood stage Wednesday afternoon, with the water level higher than 13 feet, Skipper said. Meteorologists expected it to continue rising until 7 a.m. today.

"The rain may stop, but due to runoff, it will take the rest of (the night) to reach the crest," Skipper said.

Emergency response personnel are asking people to be wary around high water.

Jose Zapata, operations supervisor with the Grant County Emergency Management Agency, cautioned people not to remove road barriers designed to keep motorists from driving into deep water.

"If you have a flooded home, get out," Zapata said. "It's better to be safe than sorry."

Some of the areas that were hardest hit from the rain-soaked grounds saw residents stranded overnight.

Zapata said residents of Stonecrest Manor Mobile Home Park, especially, were left without a good way to or from the homes.

"The road around the mobile home park is flooded and dangerous," Zapata said of Stonecrest, 2801 S. Stone Road.

Zapata said some drivers might be able to make it out in larger vehicles, but it was too dangerous for people in smaller cars to try to Stone Road until the waters recede some.

He said the Grant County Sheriff's Department was patrolling the area Wednesday night. Zapata said no one was being evacuated from their homes Wednesday, and officers were only restricting access to the flooded road.

Several other areas near the Mississinewa River were seeing very high floodwaters. North Washington Street near Matter Park - including the Hong Kong and Brooks Upper Crust Pizza restaurants - were under water. Lincoln Avenue at Jay Street was closed Wednesday afternoon. Sheriff's deputies said several low-lying areas out in the county were potentially hazardous and drivers should take caution when passing across flooded roads.

Bruce Bender, EMA director, said sandbags are available upon request. People can pick them up at the Grant County Highway Department along Garthwaite Road, south of Grant County Road 200 South.

Mark Steinwedel, meteorologist for the NWS, said no more rain was expected Wednesday night, but showers turning into light snow was likely.

Steinwedel said the water level should fall back below flood stage by 5 p.m. Thursday.

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Post-Tribune

Counties could face bill for river levee repairs

February 7, 2008

By Gitte Laasby Post-Tribune staff writer

HEBRON -- The Kankakee River Basin Commission is out of emergency funds. That means counties along the river will be stuck with the repair bill if any levees break as a result of the heavy snow and rain this week.

"I have contacted all the county officials and said, 'You're on your own. We can't help you. You need to work through your homeland security department,'" said Jody Melton, director of the commission.

The commission ran out of money after taking on \$85,000 in emergency repairs of four levees that broke after the last flood -- two in Porter County, one in LaPorte County and one in Jasper County.

Excess water is already sitting around on land in Lake and Porter counties. The National Weather Service has predicted river levels could rise to 12.4 feet in Shelby -- more than three feet over flood stage.

"I'm afraid we're going to break another levee or two," said Melton, who has warned Lake, Porter, LaPorte, Newton, Jasper, Starke, St. Joseph and Marshall county officials.

"Last time a levee broke, it was, 'Let's get this fixed, we'll worry about (the bill) later.' This time, it's either county money or the state has to be in on this decision," Melton said.

Farmers with land near the levees could also end up paying for sand. At one spot in Jasper County, river levels are 6 inches from the edge of the levee, Melton said. He hopes the state will pay \$25,000 for emergency fixes on a previous Jasper County levee break, but said it may not happen.

Contact Gitte Laasby at 648-2183, 477-6012 or glaasby@post-trib.com.

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THE NEWS-DISPATCH



Wednesday, February 06, 2008

Flash Flood Warning For Kankakee **Sandbags will be available at Hanna Highway Garage**

Wednesday, February 06, 2008

LA PORTE - With heavy rains falling across the southern half of La Porte County on Tuesday night, the National Weather Service in Northern Indiana was prompted to issue a flash-flood warning.

Rainfall totaling up to two inches was expected over a 12- to 15-hour period, according to Sam Lashley of the National Weather Service, who said the high amount is "exceptional" for February.

The heaviest rain was reported in La Porte and areas south.

Paul Young, head of emergency management for La Porte County, said Tuesday night the Kankakee River in the LaCrosse area went down 3 feet from the last heavy rainfall in January, when a levee was breached.

Young said he's worried once again about the levee, but nothing can be done other than putting down sandbags.

"You need to be prepared," Young said. "It's the same people who usually get hit. They can get sandbags at the Hanna Highway Garage."

Young lives in Wanatah, where it was raining heavily Tuesday. He planned to head for LaCrosse early today to check on the flooding situation.

The National Weather Service said temperatures could drop below freezing by midnight, with the possibility of snow or sleet. Young said the colder temperatures would be a blessing because it would prevent flood conditions from developing.

Contact Laurie Wink at lwink@thenewsdispatch.com.

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Herald Journal

FEMA opens recovery centers

Kevin Howell
Reporter

Disaster Recovery Centers opened Wednesday afternoon in three surrounding counties to assist residents affected by recent flooding.

According to FEMA, in White, Carroll and Jasper counties, residents suffering storm or flood damage beginning

Jan. 7 can access information and assistance from Indiana Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and the U.S. Small Business Administration, SBA.

The three sites will be fixed recovery centers. In Elkhart and Fulton counties, mobile centers will also be available through Feb. 10 before moving on to other disaster areas.

White County Emergency management director Gordon Cochran said having local centers will be a help. "This is a satellite office, and it's going to help local people by being here," said Cochran.

"They won't have to go running all over, and FEMA won't have to be running back and forth (from Lafayette)." Cochran also noted that the declaration is open-ended and the center could be in place for several months, especially considering this week's round of floods and storms.

"We've got places now that didn't have water before so we'll be adding to what we had before," Cochran said. White County's FEMA recovery center manager Susan Friedman was getting organized Wednesday afternoon for the 3 p.m. opening in the White County Annex on Illinois Street.

"We literally just came in and rearranged things and we're still waiting on our kits," Friedman said as a rental truck pulled up loaded with assistance kits, office supplies, posters and information.

"When people come in there will be a reception desk, we'll take them through FEMA, we'll take them through SBA, and we'll register them."

Friedman said FEMA was invited in by the state and the intent is to help flood victims any way possible. "We'll answer questions, help get through bottlenecks in the system and explain what we have to offer," Friedman said.

Workers manning the sites come from the Region 5 office out of Chicago, which serves a six-state area.

But individuals come from all over the country, and typically do not serve in their home area.

At the White County center for example, there are workers from Florida, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and northeastern U.S.

While Friedman was setting up in White County, similar things were happening in Delphi.

FEMA public information officer Sam Ventura was at the old Delphi Middle School now transformed into a Disaster Recovery Center.

He explained that the process begins with registering with FEMA whether over the phone via an 800 number, on line, or in person at one of the centers.

"After they register, an inspector, or 'verifier', will generally call and make an appointment within about seven days," said Ventura.

He said registration over the phone generally takes 12 - 15 minutes, and includes listing structural damages.

"Then he (inspector) will come over with a list of what was reported, but he will also look for other damage that might not have been noticed, for example a crack in the foundation."

Once damages are verified, Ventura said a check is usually sent out in seven to 10 days.

He urges people to register regardless of the extent of damages, and whether they have insurance or not.

No matter if registration is made by phone or online, the centers are useful tools to talk with representatives of FEMA, SBA, Internal Revenue Service and the state.

"It's a place where people can come in and see how their application is going, or if they remembered something after registering and want to ask questions," Ventura said.

As far as the SBA, he said the two organizations work closely together, and the SBA is not just for businesses. "People can also get personal, low interest loans," he said.

The loans can also supplement whatever grant money FEMA may be able to pay out to those eligible.

Representatives for hazard mitigation are also on hand at the centers to make suggestions for the future, such as setting a water heater up on blocks where flood water may not be able to reach.

They can also help people through the system of building codes, permitting and other aspects of recovery.

One question still up in the air is how to handle this week's flood when people have already registered for the January flood event.

Some were able to begin restoring homes and replaced floors and walls, and repaired structural components.

"We don't have an answer to the second flood yet and for people who were hit a second time," Ventura said.

"We're not sure of the process at this time, but the state will likely make assessments then get with FEMA. It's still under discussion."

He said the main concern at this point is to get people back on their feet.

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Herald Journal

River region swamped

Doug Howard

Reporter

The rising water along the Tippecanoe River and its tributaries this week invites a number of comparisons to flooding that occurred less than a month ago.

One major difference was in the number of people that had to be evacuated this time around.

Due to that first wave of flooding in January, many residents of flood prone areas had not yet moved back in when the water began rising again on Tuesday.

"The sheriff's department only had to evacuate, I think, two or three people, because most of the people had not yet moved back into their homes," said Carroll County Emergency Management Dave McDowell on Wednesday.

"We were fortunate in that we had some early warning for this," he said. "We made plans on the Fourth (of February) to have sheriff's deputies out overnight in the flood areas. We got a good, early warning from them and they started waking people up the morning of the fifth with their sirens and PA's."

Water levels continued to rise overnight on Tuesday, and by Wednesday morning, The Northern Indiana Public Service Company, which operates the Norway and Oakdale dams, declared a flood emergency for the dams. A flood emergency occurs when the water flow rate reaches 22,000 cubic feet per second.

"We're 24,000 going out of Oakdale and going right at 22 at Norway, and we're just kind of at a standstill right now, to see what it's gonna do next," said White County Emergency Management Gordon Cochran shortly after 8 a.m. on Wednesday. According to the National Weather Service, by 2:17 p.m., the operator at the Norway dam reported that it was fluctuating around 22,000 cubic feet per second, while the Oakdale dam was discharging at a rate of 25,933 cubic feet per second.

After going to door-to-door to notify residents in some areas on of the impending flooding on Tuesday, emergency personnel on Wednesday were responding to situations as they arose.

"At this point, anyone that needs evacuation can call in," said McDowell. "The sheriff's boats are available and nearby, just like the DNR. But most of the people still were out of those areas. After the last flood, they were kind of gun shy of the river, so they just kind of maintained their distance."

A similar situation existed in White County on Wednesday.

Cochran said he was aware of one evacuation in Monon, undertaken by the local fire department, while EMA volunteers helped a Diamond Point resident retrieve a pet.

The Cass/White County American Red Cross had set up a temporary shelter at the Lake Shafer Christian Center on West Shafer Drive on Tuesday, but had no takers.

"We didn't have anybody show up, so we're on stand by," said Director Jill Baughman on Wednesday.

In water rich Carroll County, the snowmelt-rainfall weather pattern has yielded slightly different results compared to January's deluge.

"A lot more county roads are being affected," said McDowell. "I think the ground is saturated and I've noticed the Wabash is a lot higher this time - I think the rainfall has been more general this time then specific to the Tippecanoe River, so we're getting it from every angle, basically."

Rain showers continued throughout the day on Wednesday, turning to snow later on as temperatures dropped. "The (Tippecanoe) river wasn't expected to crest until Thursday afternoon," said McDowell, citing a forecast by the National Weather Service, "at which point, it might be the equal of our last flood."

Wednesday also marked the third day this week the DNR Division of Water was doing some comparisons of its own, measuring water levels along the Tippecanoe River from its confluence with the Wabash River in Tippecanoe County to its source in Kosciusko County. Data collected from the survey will measure how this week's flooding will stack up against those past and help to determine if floodplain boundaries will need to be redrawn.

"It could revise it, or it could model what we already have," said Rodney Neese, a field supervisor with the Division of Water's mapping and survey section.

"It's a flood insurance study update, basically, and it's also historical reference," he said. "We use this for a lot of different things. We want to know how high the water's gotten in different floods and then we use it to update our flood insurance studies."

By cutting notches into permanent objects such as monuments, then determining their permanent elevation, researchers can plot a profile of the river's height during different flood events.

"We couldn't get some of the work done there on the downstream side of the Oakdale Dam," said Neese. "Because of flooding, we couldn't get in to the old marks. Down there, it's about three feet lower than the last flood."

At Blue Water Park shortly before noon on Wednesday, Neese said the DNR was finding water levels about two feet below those from January's flood.

Although highly visible, some kinds of high water marks don't qualify as official benchmarks.

Below the Oakdale Dam during the January flood survey, for example, "We saw jet skis and everything else up in trees," said Neese. "The trees collect everything, eventually."

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Mostly dry days ahead

THE STAR PRESS

After flood-causing rains hit East Central Indiana the past three days, we should be able to dry out a bit over the next few days.

Forecasts call for colder temperatures, with highs in the 30s today, but any precipitation should be limited to some scattered snow flurries.

Temperatures should reach into the 30s each of the next three days, and then Saturday night and Sunday will provide an extra drop, with overnight lows in the single digits and Sunday's high in the teens.

For more weather information: www.thestarpress.com/weather

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Rising rivers, flooding thwarts motorists

By RICK YENCER

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EATON -- Kathleen Thorpe said she had not seen the Mississinewa River rise as high -- and as quickly -- as it did Wednesday in more than 15 years.

"We are up on the hill," said Thorpe, a retired teacher who has lived in her Indiana Avenue house since 1929.

The National Weather Service had the Mississinewa cresting at 14.4 feet in Ridgeville on Wednesday afternoon, not quite approaching its record level of 16.3 feet.

Kathy Marquell, whose family farm rests next to the Mississinewa along Shindel Road, on Wednesday saw more than 120 acres of hay left under water by strong thunderstorms and heavy rain that had swept through East Central Indiana over the past 24 hours.

"Hay does not like to be wet," said Marquell, suggesting the river should be dredged between Albany, Eaton and Wheeling.

Despite the heavy rain, ECI had actually dodged another major winter storm overnight with flooding generally limited to low-lying areas.

There were no reports of injury or significant property damage from rising water from the White or Mississinewa rivers, according to local or state police.

There were several reports of cars stuck in high water in Blackford, Delaware and Randolph counties. Usual low spots on Ind. 26, east of Hartford City, and Ind. 1 south of Redkey were under water along with some county roads throughout the area.

Randolph and Blackford sheriff's deputies were the busiest, pulling people from cars stuck in high water.

None of the flash flooding was outside low-lying areas, according to Bill Gosnell, who directs Delaware County's Emergency Management Agency.

More than two inches of rain fell in the county on Tuesday and Wednesday. The White River rose to 10.2 feet by mid-day Wednesday and crested by early afternoon, according to the NWS.

The rising water did not require flood gates to be installed downtown, according to Steve Ballman, director of Muncie Sanitary District's sewer maintenance.

"The river is not out of control," said Ballman, who anticipated no problems with the rain expected to turn into snow flurries overnight.

More powerful thunderstorms moved through southern Indiana Tuesday night, downing power lines and blowing off roofs in Green, Putnam, and Vermillion counties, according to the NWS. That was part of a major storm system that swept through southern states with tornados killing more than 50 people.

Randolph County deputies pulled two drivers to safety after they drove into high water on county roads early Wednesday morning. No injuries were reported.

Sheriff Jay Harris said dispatchers received a third call of a water emergency Wednesday afternoon. A caller said a driver was stranded in high water at about 1:30 p.m., but when officers arrived, no one was there.

Several county roads were closed due to high water Wednesday, and Ind. 1 between Ind. 28 and Farmland, which is often flooded during a high-water event, was "deeply closed," the sheriff said.

Reporter Joy Leiker contributed to this article.

Contact news reporter Rick Yencer at 213-5833.

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Storms rip through Indiana

Heavy rains causes water to leak into North Quad basement

By: From Staff and Associated Press Reports

Posted: 2/7/08

BLOOMFIELD - For the second time in a week, powerful winter thunderstorms produced at least one tornado in Indiana as they marched across the state, damaging homes and buildings.

The basement of Ball State University's North Quad experienced flooding when water from the rain seeped into the building late Tuesday or early Wednesday, said Kevin Kenyon, associate vice president of facilities planning and management.

"With the rain we've had the last few days, I'm surprised that's the only building it's happened in," Kenyon said.

The water leaked through a crack in the foundation, he said.

"Water will find a crack if there is one," he said. "It's not plumbing or anything like that. It's an old building with a concrete foundation. Over time, cracks can develop."

Kenyon said he was not aware of any damage to the building that the water would have caused.

Elsewhere in the state, the unseasonable rainfalls have had more of an effect.

Flooding could cause even more damage as the National Weather Service was warning Wednesday that the Wabash, Tippecanoe and other major rivers are spilling over their banks. High waters might have contributed to at least one death when a vehicle plunged into a water-filled quarry.

In Greene County, southwest of Bloomington, a tornado Tuesday night cut a four-mile path through Bloomfield, blowing the roofs off several houses and downing trees and power lines. The National Weather Service also was investigating storm damage in Putnam, Jackson and Decatur counties to see if any other tornadoes touched down.

In Newton County, divers found a vehicle under 56 feet of water in the quarry Wednesday. The

car may have plunged into the icy water during the night east of Kentland in northwestern Indiana. Indiana Conservation officers said they believed at least one person was in the vehicle.

A diver wasn't able to open the doors to remove the body, Indiana Conservation officers said in a statement. The recovery effort was postponed until the quarry's owners could pump out the water, Conservation Officer Matt Tholen said.

In Putnam County west of Indianapolis, the storm tore the roof off a fire station in Bainbridge and destroyed its radio tower. Barns and mobile homes also were damaged, along with several utility trailers. An 80 mph wind gust was reported in Clinton in Vermillion County in western Indiana.

The storms followed unseasonably high daytime temperatures in the 60s, and were generated by the same system that produced tornadoes blamed for more than 50 deaths in the South.

But flooding was the main concern in Indiana, as rain up to 3 inches and melting snow are causing rivers to spill into some of the same low-lying areas hit hard last month.

Fountain County emergency management officials went door-to-door warning residents along the Wabash River that if the level continues to rise, they may have to evacuate. Officials in Carroll and White counties in northern Indiana also urged people along the Tippecanoe to voluntarily evacuate their homes.

The Wabash level near Lafayette in late afternoon was 22.07 feet, said John Kwiatkowski, weather service meteorologist.

The river swelled over its banks to just over 22 feet last month. Al Shipe, a hydrologist with the weather service, said it would likely crest between 24 and 25 feet. If the river gets 2 or 3 feet higher than it did in January, there could be significant flooding, he said, the worst between Lafayette and Terre Haute.

Kwiatkowski said smaller streams would go down, but those who live near larger rivers would see problems get worse. Portions of several state roads were closed in northwestern Indiana, and countless county roads were under water.

The weather service said the Wabash could reach its highest flood level since January 2005 when it crested at 25.03 feet and that major flooding was expected along the Tippecanoe River.

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Snowstorm Strands Motorists in Midwest

By JOHN HARTZELL – 1 hour ago

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Hundreds of motorists were stranded in a massive traffic pileup on Thursday, frustrated air passengers were trying to reschedule their trips and dozens of schools were closed as the Midwest dug out from a major snowstorm.

Meanwhile, residents in the Great Lakes nervously eyed rising rivers and braced for flooding.

In Wisconsin, traffic backed up for 19 miles south of Madison on Wednesday after semitrailer trucks got stuck on a hill. Gov. Jim Doyle later called a state of emergency, sending National Guard troops to help vehicles stuck in the jam blocking Interstate 90. Snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles were used to check on the stranded motorists and bring them food or fuel.

As many as 800 vehicles remained stranded Thursday morning, according to Wisconsin National Guard Lt. Col. Tim Donovan. Traffic began to move by 7:30 a.m., but troopers were still working to remove semis and cars, some of whose drivers had gone to sleep.

"We've been going out knocking on cars, waking them up and getting people moving," said Lori Getter, Wisconsin Emergency Management spokeswoman.

Peter Freeman, 29, left his restaurant in Janesville Wednesday night for his 25-mile ride home. He sat in his minivan for hours waiting, listening to the radio and watching a movie on its DVD player. People in a car in front of him eventually offered up a sandwich and soda.

Emergency workers on snowmobiles came by asking whether he was OK, but they had little information about the backup, Freeman said.

"They told us to be single file and turn on our headlights and then off they went. There was no offer of food, water or blankets. Nothing," he said.

More than 200 public school districts and private schools in southeastern, central and western Michigan canceled Thursday's classes, as did many community colleges. Dozens of schools in northern and eastern New York were closed or delayed the start of classes because of icy conditions.

General Mitchell International Airport at Milwaukee stopped all flights Wednesday afternoon due to whiteout conditions. More than 100 people spent the night in the concourses, airport spokesman Ryan McAdams. Air traffic resumed at 7 a.m. Thursday, although McAdams said delays were expected.

Lines at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport were long Thursday morning, a day after carriers canceled about 1,000 flights. Eighty flights were canceled Thursday morning, said Karen Pride, a spokeswoman for the Chicago Department of Aviation. About 100 passengers spent the night on cots.

No delays were reported across town at Chicago's Midway International Airport.

"Things are much improved from yesterday morning," Pride said.

Flood warnings were issued in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and New York after three days of heavy rain and melting snow. People in northwest Ohio moved to higher ground as forecasters predicted that floodwaters would continue to rise in an area still recovering from flooding five months ago.

Rising waters from the Blanchard River in Findlay, Ohio, were another blow to residents and business owners just getting their lives back to normal after flooding in August displaced hundreds and caused millions of dollars in damage.

"We had the place completely gutted," music store owner Scott Adams said as he loaded equipment into a trailer to try to keep it dry. "I don't see fixing the place again."

Water started spilling into downtown Wednesday afternoon, forcing the city's main thoroughfare to close where several storefronts remain empty from the last flood. Within a few hours, the entire street was covered by water, and at least 100 homes had suffered some water damage, Barker said.

The river began receding early Thursday, falling short of August's historic highs but still forcing evacuations of homes and businesses. The river reached 16.5 feet at 5 a.m. but had dropped to 16.3 feet at 9 a.m., said Marty Thompson of the Cleveland station of the National Weather Service who monitors river levels.

Flood stage is 11 feet. The river had gone to more than 7 feet over flood stage in August, resulting in the city's worst flooding since 1913.

In northwestern Indiana's Newton County, divers spotted at least one body in a vehicle submerged underwater in a quarry. The car may have plunged into the icy water overnight, Indiana Conservation officers said. A diver was unable to open the car doors, and the recovery effort was postponed until water could be pumped out, they said.

In upstate New York, freezing rain and snow contributed to a pileup that killed one person and sent another to a hospital, authorities said. In Wisconsin, two traffic fatalities were blamed on the storm.

Associated Press writers F.N. D'Alessio in Chicago and John Seewer in Findlay, Ohio, contributed to this report.

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Tornadoes, Snow, Floods Ravage Midwest and South

Deadly Twisters Ripped Across 5 Southern States, While Snow Buried the Midwest

By **SAM CHAMPION, BARBARA PINTO, LIZ SANTAY, JESSICA HOFFMAN, LINDA OWENS and OLIVIA STERNS**
Feb. 7, 2008

After surveying tornado damage in his state, Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen said, "It looks like the Lord took a Brillo pad and scrubbed the ground."

At least 55 people are now confirmed dead in the devastating storm system that spawned an estimated 80 tornadoes across five states Wednesday, splitting open shopping malls, leveling homes to their foundations and tossing cars around like toys.

In Castalian Springs, Tenn., a baby was discovered alive and unscathed in a field across from a demolished post office, The Associated Press reported. A bystander swaddled the crying child in his shirt. There was no word on the parents' fates.

"He had debris all over him, but there were no obvious signs of trauma," Ken Weidner, Sumner County emergency management director, told the AP.

On the same day as the tornadoes were spreading misery, the Great Lakes region was pummeled with a combination of snow — up to 20 inches in places — and severe flooding.

Flood warnings were issued again today in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and New York after three days of heavy rain and melting snow. In the town of Findlay, Ohio, the Blanchard River was expected to crest just five months after flooding displaced hundreds and caused millions of dollars in damage in the town.

In snow-choked Wisconsin, the governor declared a state of emergency after massive drifting paralyzed the state. The National Guard was called out to rescue motorists after Interstate 90 ground to a halt, triggering a 19-mile back up and leaving some 500 cars and trucks stuck.

One Lucky Refuge

In Atkins, Arkansas, Lucky Landing Road lived up to its name for one family.

"I pulled the door down, it sucked and I started crawling on the ground trying to find something to get ahold of to keep from being blown away, and just as I did the house fell on me and I knew if I didn't

try to hold the wall up it would crush me and I would die," said Atkins resident Terri Thomas, who lost everything in the storm.

Memphis Miracle

Twisters that touched down in the Memphis area brought 130 mph winds. The Roberts family huddled together in what shelter they could find, protecting their 9-month-old baby Grady, and miraculously survived.

"We looked around and we saw the ceiling above us was cracked and we needed to get out of where we were, so we ran as fast as we could a few feet over and got into a bathtub, and we huddled there for the remaining couple minutes of the storm," said Memphis resident Josh Roberts, whose home was also destroyed by a tornado.

Jackson Ravaged

The National Weather Service says the tornado that flattened Union University in Jackson Tennessee was an EF4, packing winds of 170 mph.

"I couldn't stand up because the wind was so strong, and I was being dragged across the floor on my stomach and then I saw a gumball machine and I thought it was attached to the floor but it wasn't; by the time I almost made it to the door the building had collapsed," said Union University student Matt Taylor.

Snowstorms Slam Midwest

Extreme weather is still crippling the Midwest today.

In Gurnee, Ill., snow rendered patrol cars useless, and police officers were forced to resort to use snowmobiles "to respond to any emergency calls 'cause they can get there faster than vehicles can," Gurnee Police Commander Jay Patrick explained.

More than a foot of snow paralyzed parts of Iowa and Wisconsin.

With the snow falling at an inch an hour, entire fleets of plows could barely keep up. The blinding storm grounded an estimated one thousand flights at Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

"I was supposed to get out here and go to Seattle and that's not happening," said Mike Elgarten, who was stranded at the airport. "Tried to go to Dallas, that's not happening. Tried to get back to New York, that's not happening."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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Yet more flooding hits northern IN

Some January flood survivors face clean-ups all over again.

BY BOND BRUNGARD | Monticello, IN | February 6, 2008

The muck-out, the initial cleanup from January's flooding in Northern Indiana was nearly complete this week in some northern Indiana communities until when more heavy rain sent the Wabash and Tippecanoe rivers spilling over their banks.

On Tuesday, residents along the Tippecanoe in White and Carroll counties were sent evacuation advisories as water below the Oakdale and Norway dams started to rise and flooded those areas hit by the January flood.

The Rev. Todd Ladd, pastor of the Dephi United Methodist Church, said there are fewer residents to evacuate this time. "A lot of folks haven't moved back in yet," he explained.

The same conditions that caused January's flooding -- lots of snow, cold temperatures followed by rising temperatures and heavy rains -- struck again this time after heavy rain washed away about 10 inches of snow that fell since the first of February.

Volunteers were arriving to help with the recovery after the planned closure of the muck-out from the January floods, but their services won't be needed until the water recedes again.

"We won't be doing that now," Ladd, said of closing down the first muck-out.

Once the water recedes again, Ladd worries about the stress victims from the January floods and those who responded to help must go through next.

"And now we have the emotional toll," he said.

A few weeks ago President George W. Bush issued a disaster declaration for nine northern Indiana counties flooded early in January, and now the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and many faith-based groups are planning the long term recovery.

FEMA is setting up disaster recovery centers in White and Carroll counties as well as putting mobile recovery units on the road in the other counties of Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski and Tippecanoe to help those who have lost or are rebuilding homes.

Nearly 1,000 homes were affected by the flooding caused by revolving weather conditions, which have included freezing and spring-like temperatures, snow and heavy rains.

In Delphi, in Carroll County, FEMA has set up a disaster recovery center in a former middle school gymnasium, so representatives can meet with those needing assistance. It's estimated that 300 homes were damaged in Carroll County.

Sandy Jasmund, a FEMA public information officer, said there will be a 60-day window for assistance and that the needs will be handled on a case by case basis. "We want to find out what kind of damage they had," she said.

And FEMA's assistance for individual damages will be determined on if or how much the applicant was insured. Jasmund said representatives from the federal Small Business Administration will be on hand to help applicants, whether residents or business people, finance their recovery.

The Rev. Jim Ward, pastor of the New Hope Lutheran Church in Monticello in White County, has been chosen to head a yet unnamed long-term recovery committee for the nine-county region, which is comprised of representatives from faith-based and governmental and volunteer agencies like the Habitat for Humanity from Lafayette.

Ward said the group will be meeting again soon to try and determine the long term needs. Ward has sought assistance from denominational organizations and will try and establish spiritual care teams to help survivors deal with stress that could possibly lead to suicide.

In the meantime, the community has been helping with clothing and funding donations. "When there is work to do – and in this community – it will happen," said Ward.

A shelter has been established in Remington, which served dozens of people for many days. In Rennselaer, about 30 homes were destroyed in a trailer park. Ward said money will be used to help survivors like these for their daily living and transportation needs.

The Rev. Brian Beeks, pastor the United Methodist Church in Monticello, in the past has worked to help flood survivors living in a shelter, and he said it's tough, both emotionally and physically, for everybody involved.

"It's just so exhausting," he said.

Beeks will be working with recovery in his community and will help coordinate hospitality efforts. Beeks said some people have been living in the second floor of homes that stood initially in four or five of water, and they will need assistance to return their residences to safe living conditions.

"We're a community with one another and working together," said Beeks, of the long term effort.

As the recovery gets underway, Carroll County highway crews have been removing debris and a vendor registration program for prospective contractors has been established. And now the process of issuing building permits has started as homeowners try to get back under roofs again.

Dave McDowell, the director of Carroll County's emergency management agency, said many families, with homesteads dating back generations, will probably be rebuilding in the same places in the low areas.

"They fully intend to stay there," he said. "And in some of the places, you shouldn't have built a home in the first place."

As county and federal government agencies move forward, members and volunteers from The Delphi United Methodist Church have been involved in the initial muck-out process by helping residents return to safe and sanitary living conditions.

They have been assisted by a Southern Baptist disaster group with experience from the Hurricane Katrina cleanup. Kim Aldrich, an office administrator with the Methodist church and an interfaith liaison to Carroll County, said the Baptist contingent has helped train local volunteers with the filing of the proper paperwork needed with the recovery.

Aldrich said the experienced volunteers are also helping to establish the proper sanitation measures with the initial muck-out including advisement regarding the purchases of drywall and insulation products.

About 17 homes have been completed, and Aldrich said clean-up crews have had to deal with the same weather conditions, alternating spring and freezing temperatures, that preceded the flood last month.

"The furniture is frozen to the carpet," she said.

There has also been help from the First Presbyterian Church in Delphi, which opened its Deacon's Closet to help with clothing needs. And a truckload of non-perishable food is being distributed from Camp Tecumseh, courtesy of Church of Christ volunteers, to families. Aldrich said families are receiving a four-five day supply of food from the large donation.

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River runs over it: Several roads closed due to flooding

Heavy rain fall in recent days has forced the closing of several thoroughfares in the area.

Workers put up signs and barriers across Indiana 19 just north of Logan Street in Noblesville Wednesday afternoon as flooding of the nearby White River closed the road to traffic.

Rising waters along the White River prompted the Indiana Department of Transportation to close Indiana 19 Wednesday between Logan Street and Field Drive.

Ind. 19 connects Noblesville with Cicero, Arcadia and other points to the north, and this section carries about 10,000 vehicles on an average day, according to INDOT.

In addition, Allisonville Road is closed between Wellington Parkway and Westminster Drive. Other flooded roads closed roads are:

Riverwood Avenue and Riverwood Drive north of 206th Street
166th Street north of Union Chapel
Edith Avenue and Boulder Drive located north of Potter's Bridge

The National Weather Service anticipates moderate flooding of the White River in Hamilton County to crest Friday afternoon. INDOT's Tipton Subdistrict will continue to monitor Ind. 19, and reopen the road once waters recede, which is currently anticipated for this weekend.

When encountering a flooded roadway, INDOT urges drivers to "Turn around, don't drown." According to the National Weather Service, most flooding deaths occur in automobiles. Six inches of standing water is enough to cause passenger cars to stall and a foot of water will float many vehicles.

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Commission short of funds for repairs to Kankakee River levees

Posted: Wednesday, February 6, 2008 8:56 AM CST

HEBRON, Ind. (AP) - The Kankakee River Basin Commission does not have enough money to pay for repairs to four levees that broke during last month's flooding.

The commission has about \$50,000 to cover such emergencies, but the bills for fixing the levees total about \$85,000, said commission director Jody Melton.

"The river basin has a little money to cover emergencies, but I don't have enough to pay for all these bills. The bills are still coming in," Melton told the Post-Tribune. He said he had requested help from state and federal agencies, including the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Between 3 and 5 inches of rain fell Jan. 7-8. Two of the river's levees broke in Porter County, both east of Indiana 49. One broke in LaPorte County, east of LaCrosse. The last break, west of Indiana 49 in Jasper County, was about 75 feet wide and caused water to gush into about a square mile of farmland.

The levees have been repaired and should hold even if river levels go up as a result of more rain or snowfall this week, Melton said.

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FEMA Disaster Recovery

FEMA set up a Disaster Recovery Center at Elkhart County's Fire Department Station 3 in Goshen.

You'll be seeing FEMA's RV sitting out front.

They're there to provide information for residents who suffered damages from the January 7th severe storms and flooding.

You can get information on your claims, figure out what you qualify for and apply for a low-interest loans through the small business administration.

You can do all of this over the phone or on-line, but this center is for people who are more comfortable with one-on-one help.

Richard Gifford, FEMA Public Affairs says, "Oh, it's very early yet, so there's a lot of people who haven't registered. We don't have as of yet, how many people have registered but we're getting the word out. We've got community relations in the field going door to door, knocking on doors making sure that 800 number gets out."

Matthew Young from the Small Business Administration says, "On disasters, the small business administration offers low interest loans to homeowners, renters as well as businesses of any size so our name is a little misleading but we want to encourage people, anybody who had damage to call and register."

And that is the key - registering. That's something you need to do first even before you go to the information center.

You can do that by calling 1-800-621 FEMA or on-line at www.fema.gov

The Disaster Recovery Center will be there every day through Sunday from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m.

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Counties issue state of emergency one month after last declaration

by Nora Gathings (hsgathings@wsbt.com)

People near Winamac are being asked to voluntarily evacuate as Tippecanoe River levels continue to rise. (WSBT photo)

By WSBT News1

Story Created: Feb 6, 2008 at 9:54 PM EST

Story Updated: Feb 7, 2008 at 5:08 AM EST

WINAMAC — The night before the first local river crests, emergency management officials are taking no chances. Voluntary evacuations are underway in several counties. The Yellow River is expected to crest at noon Thursday.

Further south, the Tippecanoe River is expected to rise another few feet before it crests Saturday.

The flooding isn't causing too many problems right now. Many of the places that were under feet of water last month are still dry, but Emergency Management officials have put several counties, including Pulaski, under a state of emergency, knowing that things could get a lot worse.

The Tippecanoe River is rising, crossing roads and approaching homes.

"It's remarkable. I haven't seen anything like it in my entire life," said Katherine Elam, a Pulaski County Emergency Management volunteer.

"My mother, it reach her knees throughout her house. We had to evacuate her at 6 o'clock this morning."

That was just the beginning of her river battle.

"Me and my partner were tying down a boat for a gentleman just in case because he decided to stay," she said.

Elam and other Emergency Management volunteers keep track of the flooding and road closures on maps. This week's map is missing one thing: massive flooding.

"The flooding isn't too bad at this point," said Larry Hoover, Pulaski County Emergency Management director.

The river won't crest until Saturday.

"If it gets to the same level, it's going to be the same homes again," said Hoover.

And once again, these volunteers will be fighting to stay upstream.

"At least we know what to do. It's fresh in our minds," said Hoover.

Right now, officials are only evacuating two areas near the Tippecanoe River. They say people are being much more cooperative this time.

A Red Cross Shelter has been set up at Bethel Bible College in Winamac, but people are staying with friends and family again.

Volunteers say they've even seen people loading up moving trucks and moving out.

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Flooding returns to Elkhart County

by Ed Ernstes (ernstes@wsbt.com)

Story Created: Feb 6, 2008 at 6:45 PM EST

Story Updated: Feb 6, 2008 at 6:45 PM EST

ELKHART — For the second time in just a few weeks, parts of the area are flooding. At least two counties — Pulaski and Marshall — have declared a state of emergency. For some homeowners, that means voluntary evacuations.

In Elkhart County, the rising water is targeting homes, businesses and roads.

Flooding problems were evident throughout a number of areas of the county, whether at Old Farm Apartments on Elkhart's south side, in yards and driveways near Wakarusa, in Rogers Park in Goshen, or county roads near Foraker.

"And so it's going to be a cycle — we're going to get some snow, it will accumulate a little bit, then it's going to melt due to the rain, so the flooding is going to be persistent," explained Jennifer Tobey of Elkhart County Emergency Management.

And that could be the case for the shopping center in Goshen off Chicago Avenue. It looks like it did last month when water levels went up.

Diana Garcia works at a thrift shop there.

"I said to myself, 'It's happening all over again,' and gee wiz, look at it again," she told WSBT News. "And this is not very good again, this not very good."

For now she says she is keeping her fingers crossed that the water does not rise up once again into her store. But for the moment she says she can't rule anything out.

"We're just going to have to live day by day," Garcia said.

South of Goshen on County Road 21 rising waters from a drainage ditch caused a portion of the road to cave in near Mike Rippey's home.

"It rained very hard and the ditch came way up," Rippey explained. "It couldn't handle all the water, so it went over it and of course under the asphalt, undermined it and you see the results."

The American Red Cross has set up shelters for people displaced by the floods. They are in Goshen, Elkhart, Winamac, and Plymouth. For more information click on the links in the Related Content box.

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Red Cross sets up local shelters

Tribune Staff Report

By Tiffany Griffin

Story Created: Feb 6, 2008 at 3:18 PM EST

Story Updated: Feb 6, 2008 at 4:20 PM EST

WINAMAC — The American Red Cross is opening an evacuation shelter in Winamac for those affected by flooding.

The shelter will be at Bethel Bible Church, 6966 W. Indiana 14.

The Red Cross will send its Emergency Response Vehicle with cots, blankets, food and other items, which are expected to arrive at the shelter by about 3 p.m. today.

Residents who come to the shelter are encouraged to bring medicines, pillows, bedding, things for children and items of comfort.

The Red Cross chapter in St. Joseph County is setting up the shelter after a request by the Emergency Management Agency. Flood waters are expected to rise over the next few days in the Pulaski County area.

A shelter for anyone displaced by flood waters will open at noon today at First United Church of Christ, 321 N. Center St.

The shelter will be staffed by volunteers from the Marshall County Chapter of the American Red Cross, and will offer cots, food and beverages, disaster coordinator Mickey Davenport said.

Additionally, an incident command center to handle flood problems will begin operation at noon at the Plymouth Fire Station, 111 N. Center St.

Plymouth Mayor Mark Senter plans a news conference at 2 p.m. in Common Council Chambers, 124 N. Michigan St., to update the public on the flooding situation.

The Red Cross is also setting up a shelter in Goshen for flooded out residents in a mobile home park.

Jennifer Tobey with the Elkhart County Emergency Management reports that 14 mobile homes in the Creekside Mobile Home Park are surrounded by flood waters from Rock Run Creek.

The mobile home park is located near Wilden and Indiana avenue in Goshen.

For more information on Red Cross locations, stay tuned to wsbt.com

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Published: February 06, 2008 11:52 pm

Storm cleanup begins across Wabash Valley

Many still without power Wednesday evening

By Crystal Garcia
The Tribune-Star

TERRE HAUTE — More than 1,300 Duke Energy customers still were without power Wednesday evening in Vigo County as residents continued to recover from the effects of Tuesday evening's damaging winds.

Wednesday was a day for assessment and cleanup after the storm that tore through the city and left downed trees, signs and flooding in its aftermath.

In all, more than 12,500 Duke Energy customers in Vigo County had lost power since 7 p.m. Tuesday.

Duke had restored power to all its customers in Parke and Sullivan counties by 7 p.m. Wednesday. Nearly 600 customers had lost their electricity in Parke County alone. Less than 30 of the 3,500-plus customers who had lost power in Clay, Vermillion and Greene counties remained in the dark Wednesday evening.

Electricity wasn't a problem for one resident on the city's north side, it was gas. An uprooted tree near a gas meter caused a gas leak outside her house. Someone who noticed an odor brought it to her attention.

"We had some pretty bad wind up here," the resident said.

By Thursday afternoon, the leak had been capped, and a more permanent repair may be necessary, said Mike Roeder, director of corporate communications for Vectren Energy.

"Weather certainly has impacted gas lines before," Roeder said. "It's just not very common."

Rick Burger, business relations manager for Duke Energy, said more than 150 workers were working to make sure customers' power was restored. He planned for them to work through the night.

Although they dealt with about six transformer fires Tuesday night, Burger said most of the damage was caused by wind.

According to Chad Swain, National Weather Service meteorologist, winds in Terre Haute reached 63 mph.

Burger expected Wednesday night's biggest challenge to be the decreasing temperatures, he said. Wednesday's overnight lows were expected to be in the mid-20s with today's high in the upper 30s, Swain said.

A tornado swept through Bloomfield on Tuesday evening with 100 mph winds.

Roofs were blown off some houses and garages collapsed, according to a Greene County Sheriff's Department news release. Trees fell on houses, cars, roadways and power lines around town.

School was canceled Wednesday, but expected to be in session today. All roads were open by Wednesday afternoon as people from outside the county were coming in to help with the cleanup.

People in need of shelter were taking refuge in First Baptist Church. The American Red Cross was called in.

Carol Stevens, executive director of the Wabash Valley Red Cross, said volunteers in Bloomfield reported more than 50 homes were affected by the tornado. The Red Cross is opening a service center at the Bloomfield Fire Department from 4 to 8 p.m. today and Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday to meet with individuals and families to determine how to help.

Volunteers also helped families in Putnam and Clay counties because their trailers were destroyed, Stevens said.

The Red Cross also opened up its Terre Haute headquarters to use as a warming center for those who had lost power during the storm. As of about 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Stevens said only two residents were left at the center. Those residents' power was expected to be restored by 9 p.m., she said.

Wabash River levels were at 18.82 feet Wednesday, Swain said, which is almost five feet above flood stage. The river is expected to crest Sunday afternoon at about 23.3 feet, he said.

Flooding wasn't a problem yet in Parke, Clay or Sullivan counties as well as Clark and Edgar counties in Illinois, according to officials, though some sandbags were put down in Sullivan County.

Some sandbags were laid down in Vermillion County also. The Big Vermillion River in the Eugene area flooded a nearby campground, forcing an evacuation, said Kirt Lowry, public information officer for the Vermillion County Emergency Management Agency.

About 15 roads were closed in Vigo County because of high water, trees or power lines.

Cleanup crews will clear the trees and logs out of the roadways to make them passable and return later for the full cleanup, said J.D. Kesler, public information officer for the Vigo County Emergency Management Agency.

Most people who live in the flooding areas already know what to do, though, Kesler said.

He said the most important thing is to have a family emergency plan in which everyone knows where to meet in case of a weather emergency — such as a relative's house on higher ground.

"Have your 72-hour kit in your home, know what you need, especially if you're on any kind of medication, [as] people don't think about that, he said. "People don't think about their pets, so that if you are cut off for a while that you can take care of yourself until help arrives."

During the storm, Vigo County Central Dispatch took more than 400 calls, Kesler said, some of which were not real emergencies.

Unless people have a medical device powered by electricity, 911 should not be called when a person's power goes out, he said.

"... A great number of people [Tuesday] called 911 to let them know that a tree fell over," Kesler said. "... and during that time someone ... that had an actual medical emergency wouldn't have been able to get through to 911 and people need to realize that."

Kesler said people should call Central Dispatch's non-emergency number of (812) 462-3226 in those types of instances.

An additional problem for emergency responders is people leaving their homes to survey the damage from the storm.

"First responders, for a very large part of the first response community, are volunteer workers, and they're out there, literally, putting their lives on the line for you and me and our families," Kesler said, "and we get in their way when we go out and look around at things, and we need to give them the opportunity to get things back to order, and then if you want to do anything with a first responder, walk up to them and thank them."

Jeri Stark wasn't out looking at damage — she was just trying to get home — when her car hit a tree in the middle of the road. She had to stay inside her car for more than an hour because the tree had knocked down power lines.

Stark, West Vigo High School dean, was on Sarah Meyers Road about a mile and a half west of West Vigo High School, heading home from exercising at the high school with a friend.

Shortly after they were gathering their things to head home around 8:30 p.m., the power at the high school went out, she said.

Intense rain made it difficult to see the tree in the roadway until it was too late, Stark said. Fortunately, her friend wasn't traveling far behind her and got out of the car to see what had happened.

That's when she noticed the power lines and ran back to her car to call Stark to tell her not to exit the car, Stark said.

Dispatchers told her to stay inside and not to touch anything metal in the car until emergency workers and Duke Energy personnel could arrive.

After about an hour and 15 minutes, it was determined that the power lines were not live and Stark was told it was safe to back up her car and leave it, she said.

"It was kind of scary," Stark said. "You always hear those things, power lines down, you're safe as long as you're in your car ... I'm just glad I had my cell phone because it was my link to the outside world and to know what was going on."

A tow truck removed her car from the scene.

Looking back, Stark said she probably should have stayed at the school.

"If you hear that there are dire warnings to stay put, probably we would have been better off if we had just stayed here at school and let it pass, but we were only two miles from home and we thought, 'Oh, we can get home,'" she said. "That was probably foolish on our part ... I'm just glad nobody got hurt."

Tribune-Star reporter Austin Arceo contributed to this report. He can be reached at (812) 231-4214 or austin.arceo@tribstar.com.

Crystal Garcia can be reached at (812) 231-4271 or crystal.garcia@tribstar.com.

Help available

- Families and individuals who need help because of damage from Tuesday's storm in Clay, Greene, Parke, Sullivan and Vermillion counties in Indiana and Edgar County in Illinois can call the Wabash Valley Red Cross Chapter at 1-866-932-3393.

- Vigo County residents can call (812) 232-3393.

- Donations can be mailed to: The American Red Cross Wabash Valley Chapter

700 S. Third St.

Terre Haute, IN 47807.

Bloomfield help available

- Bloomfield families and individuals affected by Tuesday's tornado can meet with Red Cross volunteers for help at the Bloomfield Fire Department at 75 Mill St. from 4 to 8 p.m. today and Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 1-866-932-3393.

Roads closed

The following Vigo County roads were closed because of high water, trees or power lines:

- Pettiford between Creal and North Main
- Cook between Certain and McCullough
- Auk between Eppert and Twin Beach
- Pottsville between Sandford and Elliott's Junkyard
- Pennington between Indiana 63 and Pottsville
- Bowen from last house and west
- Yeager from Siosi Oil and west
- Cullen between Kennett and Indian Meadows
- McNutt at Hale Place
- Eastwind between Louisville and Moseman
- Rosedale between Grand and Mill Dam
- Rio Grande between Erickson and Springcreek
- Oregon Church between Payne and Sullivan
- Dearborn between Blackhawk and Eastwind

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What's up with what's coming down?

By Jamie Hergott and Brian Kern
Hendricks County Flyer (Avon, Ind.)

AVON, Ind. — There's an old adage that if you want the weather to change in Indiana, just stick around. State and local officials aren't going anywhere.

"We're watching very closely right now," said John Erickson, senior public information officer for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

Erickson says that while the only county under any kind of heightened weather alert is White County, water is hard to predict and his staff is keeping a close eye on the entire state.

"The rain is coming and snow is melting and we just don't know how that's going to effect where it will pool," Erickson said. "Water is just so insidious. It can creep everywhere."

The National Weather Service issued several watches for Hendricks County lasting through this morning, including a flood warning (meaning floods are imminent or have been reported) and a flood watch (meaning the current forecast suggests ideal conditions for a flood). These issues are in effect until 10:15 a.m. today.

Erickson says that National Weather Service staff has been in contact with counties and various local agencies to talk about issues, needs, or any assistance that may be needed. But the authority to ask for that assistance and take action lies with the county officials.

"While we ourselves may not actually provide the aid, we are here to assist to help at whatever level they need," Erickson said. "We will connect them with trained officials who can help."

In Hendricks County, Emergency Management Agency officials say they have adequate resources to mass produce sand bags, should the need arise, and at least one report cautioned that flooding could reach levels comparable to the high waters that greeted the area back in January 2005.

But for now, town officials say it's really just a waiting game.

"Generally in Avon we don't have too many problems," Avon Public Works Director Ryan Cannon said. "Still, when you have frozen and saturated ground in the winter time combined with heavy rains, it's certainly something we pay attention to."

Plainfield Town Manager Rich Carlucci echoed similar sentiments.

"Creeks are running pretty high and we have sand bags ready if we need them, but it has

dissipated,” he said.

Kit Werbe, spokeswoman for the Indiana branch of the American Red Cross, says that the agency is ready in the event of severe flooding in the area.

“I’ve received several inquiries about our preparation and the answer is that we’re always prepared,” Werbe said. “We’re not really doing anything different or out of the norm, but the minute something does happen we’ll spring into action.”

The NWS says that two to three inches of rain total is expected to fall locally, and the rain is falling on partially frozen ground. This means the rain will not be able to soak in and may be the cause of some flooding. The NWS recommends that residents continue to practice caution.

Erickson says there are several simple things that can make a big difference in one’s safety during a time of questionable weather.

“Use common sense,” he said. “If there’s fog, slow down. Leave yourself extra time. Don’t drive like it’s a clear, sunny day. As far as standing water, be cautious. Watch for other drivers more than you normally would. And keep your lights on.”

Jamie Hergott and Brian Kern write for the Hendricks County Flyer in Avon, Ind.

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A Wabash Valley town pulls together after the storm

Posted: Feb 6, 2008 05:28 PM EST

BLOOMFIELD, Ind. - The storm spawned a rare February tornado in the southern Indiana town of Bloomfield.

The light of day showed a path of destruction 50 yards wide that ran from the south side of Bloomfield to the north side. Trees were uprooted, houses smashed and outbuildings crumpled. Residents say the storm hit with a fury.

"The house shook, the lights went out. It sounded like a freight train coming through. My ears started popping and by then me and my little dog were headed to the basement," said Henry Suniga.

The storm damaged Suniga's home and vehicles, and tossed debris into the playground at the school next door. The storm's path took it just east of the school and then it tore through town leaving damage and destruction in its wake. The powerful storm sent not one but 2 trees crashing down into this house.

"Mr. Walters here was in the house when it happened. I made contact with him through a window and he said he was fine, go to other people," said Rob Weddle.

The narrow band of damage stretched across a 4 mile long area. Neighbors checked on neighbors, and despite the pounding the people here came out ok.

"The fact that nobody got hurt is amazing when you look at some of the houses, especially the one behind me," said Roger Doane.

Weather officials surveyed the damage, and what they saw left no doubt about what happened here.

"Given the narrowness of the path and the straightness of the path and the degree of damage that took place and the trees pointing toward the path it's all suggestive of a tornado," said Dave Tucek, National Weather Service.

A tornado that in minutes tore this town apart and did damage that may take months to fix. Now, to help those families displaced by last night's storms, the American Red Cross Wabash Valley Chapter, will have volunteers on hand at the Bloomfield Fire Department Thursday and Friday from 4 to 8 p.m. and then again on Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

All you have to do is bring an ID to the center. For more information, call 1-866-932-3393.

By: [Mike Grant](#)
WTHI-TV

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Storms rip through Indiana, most rivers rising

Associated Press - February 6, 2008 5:24 PM ET

BLOOMFIELD, Ind. (AP) - At least one body is reported in a submerged car in a flooded Newton County quarry. Authorities say it may have plunged into the icy water overnight because of the heavy rains and flooding from the latest winter storm.

Conservation officials say the recovery of the body has been delayed until the quarry's owners can pump out the water.

For the second time in a week, the storms produced at least one tornado in Indiana, with a Bainbridge fire station among the damaged homes and buildings.

The flooding could cause even more damage, and the National Weather Service says the Wabash, Tippecanoe and other major rivers are spilling over their banks.

In Greene County, a tornado cut a four-mile path through Bloomfield last night, blowing the roofs off several houses and downing trees and power lines. The National Weather Service

also is investigating storm damage in Putnam, Jackson and Decatur counties to see if any other tornadoes touched down.

The weather service says cresting on many of the rivers will occur over the weekend into next week.

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